

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, January 30, 2014

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Tattoo factor as Wagner starts brand new career

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Blasted

Homes are struck by lightning in freak storm

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New Poirot

Robert Powell is taking on detective role at the Grand

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Colour of hair led Frances to suicide



Frances Warren, 26

A YOUNG office worker killed herself after becoming obsessed about her hair and fearing it had turned ginger. Blonde Frances Warren, aged 26, drove 80 miles to woodland in Sedgley and hung herself, an inquest heard.

She had bombarded her hairdresser with 50 text messages but immediately after booking an appointment she disappeared, leaving her handbag behind.

Anxiety

Two days later, after a huge manhunt, her body was found in dense woodland off Hickmerlands Lane. Her silver Honda Civic car was recovered nearby.

Miss Warren had seen her GP a couple of weeks earlier reporting symptoms of anxiety and stress and had been offered anti-depressants and had referred herself to counselling.

Miss Warren and her boyfriend had been living together in a rented two-bed house in Bradley Stoke, near Bristol, but in December 2012 had returned to live with the respective parents in order to save money.

Detective Constable Sue Pesticcio said that on May 28 - the day before Miss Warren's disappearance - she was upset about her hair. "All of a sudden she wasn't happy with it saying it was ginger and her whole world was falling apart. She said things like wishing she was dead, she hated how she looked, she appeared to have lost all confidence."

Terrence Moore, Assistant Coroner for Avon, recorded that Miss Warren had taken her own life.

LOVING COUPLE ARE TORN APART

Report by Alex Ross

THEY met, fell in love and married. But 12 years after vowing to spend their lives together, Robert and Adna Cooper have been ripped apart from each other.

The pair have been split up by immigration officials who have refused her a right to stay in the UK. Robert, a church pastor, has paid an emotional farewell to his beloved wife as she stepped on a flight back to Brazil, her country of birth, both devastated by a 'grave injustice'.

But 35-year-old Robert has vowed not to give up his fight and has now been given an appeal hearing in July against the visa decision. The Home Office's refusal for the 34-year-old to stay came down to new immigration rules which mean British people who earn more than £18,600 a year can sponsor their non-European spouse's visa but Robert, from Pensnett, works for a non-profit organisation and cannot get required pay slips.

£110k waste by tenants over repairs

MORE than £110,000 has been wasted from hard-up Dudley Council's coffers after thousands of appointments were missed by tenants who said they needed repairs.

Bosses have hit out at those who have cost the authority money after bills rocketed over the past 12 months. The cash-strapped council, which is looking to have to make cut-backs of around £58 million over the next three years, says money is wasted by council tenants forgetting repairs appointments.

Council chiefs revealed that more than £110,000 was wasted last year due to unnecessary visits. The authority calculated that during 2013 more than 8,000 customers were not present to let staff in or it turned out that the repairs were not required.

Housing boss Councillor Steve Waltho, said wasted fuel and staff time equated to more than £110,000, which could have been spent on urgent maintenance elsewhere.

"The vast majority of our tenants use the repairs and maintenance service responsibly, for which I'm grateful, but a small number of residents are losing us a lot of money," he said. "£110,000 is a shocking amount which could be better spent. This sum would have allowed us to replace approximately 30 kitchens or bathrooms, or to install more than 350 double-glazed windows."

The heartbroken husband said: "As you can imagine we are both devastated. All this because of six pay slips that I simply cannot provide and have explained the reasons why."

The couple had hoped the appeal hearing could be heard ahead of Adna's tourist visa expiry on Thursday but after discovering the date they made the decision that she return to Brazil. He said: "The reason is that we do not want to give them any motives to accuse her of overstaying illegally. Adna has an impeccable immigration history and we want to abide by the laws."

Painful

"This is extremely painful for us both. I can not go with her because of my employment. If I were to be unemployed at the time of the hearing, I would surely lose my appeal to let her live here."

The pair met while Robert was on a Christian mission in Sao Paulo in Brazil and six months later married at Kingswinford Christian Centre and settled, with both in full-time employment, for three years. The pair then returned to South America to teach English for nine years.

When Robert was offered a job in the UK for First Renewal Presbyterian Church, he was told he could not bring his wife. He decided to work for the non-profit organisation and invited Adna last July on a tourist visa to live with his parents Robert and Katherine in Comber Drive.

He said: "I feel the way they are treating us is disgraceful and the petty bureaucratic arguments they are coming up with to justify this simply do not warrant separating a man from his wife of almost 12 years. "They are committing a grave injustice."

The appeal hearing will take place on July 11. The couple are receiving support from Dudley North MP Chris Kelly.



Six thousand miles apart - Robert and Adna, who have been forced to live on different continents after 12 years of marriage due to new immigration regulations

Proposal to extend rail park and ride

A £1.3 million plan to extend the park and ride service at Stourbridge Junction rail station and create an extra 178 spaces has been lodged.

Centro wants to develop land to the north of the overflow car park in Rufford Road. Bosses say there is a rising demand for spaces and both the main car park, off Chawn Hill, and the overflow site are full to capacity. The new site is located between the Birmingham and Worcester rail track and industrial units on Rufford Road. The site is owned by Centro and is currently only used for the storage of bus shelters and general waste.

Under the plans, as well as the new spaces, there will be a covered walkway. CCTV cameras and lights will also be installed as well as a Help Point facility.

The main car park has 381 spaces and the overflow car park has 401 spaces. But there is a demand for spaces with the car parks often full to capacity by the end of the morning rush hour. Nearby roads also become clogged with cars left by commuters.

The plans have been submitted to Dudley Council and will be considered in the coming weeks.

The plan has been welcomed by Stourbridge Line User Group and Stourbridge MP Margot James.

Child taken to hospital

A CHILD was among five people taken to hospital following a head-on smash involving two cars in Dudley.

The 14-month-old suffered a minor head injury in the crash at the junction of Peartree Lane and Hulbert Drive shortly after 7.30pm on Sunday. The youngster was taken to Russells Hall Hospital with his mother, aged in her 20s, who was driving a Peugeot. The passenger in the woman's car, a man in his 20s, was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Two men in a Citroen suffered minor injuries.

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Councillor calls for asbestos checks

DEMANDS are being made for all public buildings in Dudley borough to be inspected for asbestos after the discovery of the substance led to the closure of classrooms at a Halesowen school.

A small amount of asbestos was discovered in a heating pipe at Earls High School. Three classrooms and a 'toilet have been sealed off while work is carried out to remove the material.

UKIP councillor for Halesowen, Ken Turner, wants Dudley Council to inspect similar buildings.

He said: "I would like to think that Dudley Council will embark on a programme of looking into all buildings that are used by the public. They need to be observed and checked to make sure they do not contain asbestos and could cause danger to the public."

Councillor Turner, who recently

switched from being a Conservative to UKIP, added: "Additional work has been done for new buildings at the site. I would have thought the council could have looked for and identified the asbestos then. It should have been found and removed a long time ago."

Asbestos is not dangerous unless it is disturbed and fibres become airborne. The Health and Safety Executive and a health and safety team

from Dudley Council assisted the school. The substance was discovered on January 6 after the heating broke down.

The school was closed for the following two days. Since then, the classrooms and toilet have been sealed off with drama lessons having to be held elsewhere in the school.

The schools will look to improve the heating system over the coming years.

Borough is top of the class in Black Country

SCHOOLS in Dudley recorded the best exam results in the Black Country – putting them in the top third in England.

The borough was ranked 28th out of 152 local authorities based on the average points scored per student for qualifications such as A-levels.

More Dudley children achieved five or more GCSEs including English and Maths, than ever before, according to national performance tables. An impressive 59.7 per cent achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-C, including English and Maths. This is up from 56.1 per cent overall, making these results the best yet.

Success

Children's services boss, Councillor Tim Crumpton, said: "It is a tribute to the professionalism of our teachers and we are working hard with them to get all of our schools to the same standard. I want to put on record my thanks to all concerned." Ellowes Hall Sports College was top in the borough for its GCSE results, with 80 per cent of 199 pupils eligible for GCSEs taking home five or more grades from A*-C including English and maths.

Ellowes Hall headteacher Andrew Griffiths put the outstanding results down to the dedication of his staff and students at the Lower Gornal school.

Mr Griffiths said he was also surprised but honoured to have received a letter from schools' minister David Laws MP praising their efforts as one of the best performing secondary schools in the country.

He said: "It is a matter of great pride for everyone here at Ellowes Hall. I have to thank all my staff and the students for their hard work."

Summerhill School in

by Andrew Turton

Kingswinford was named second as 79 per cent of its 202 GCSE pupils achieved similar success.

In third was Bishop Milner Catholic College, with 76 per cent of its 117 pupils taking home five A*-C grades at GCSE with English and Maths. The Burton Road college was also third at Key Stage 5.

King Edward VI College in Stourbridge was top in Dudley for the average scores per pupil at A-level.

Hagley Catholic High School was the fifth top-performing school within Worcestershire.

Secondary schools in Sandwell also celebrated that borough's best combined results for the average percentage of candidates achieving five GCSEs at grade C or higher including English and maths. It rose from 53.8 per cent last year, up to 54.1 per cent this year and outdid Dudley and Birmingham in vocational qualifications at Key Stage 5, such as BTECs and NVQs, according to the average scores of students.

Sandwell Academy in West Bromwich was a stand-out performer, named top for its GCSE results.

Wolverhampton was ranked highest for the average percentage of pupils receiving five or more A*-C grades at GCSE including English and maths. Wolverhampton Girls High School was named top for GCSE results as every one of its 104 pupils managed at least five GCSE grades from A*-C including English and Maths.



Head Andrew Griffiths with pupils, from left, head girl Kathryn Slater, Abi Bradley, head boy Jamie Rushin and Ben O'Connor at Ellowes Hall Sports College, Lower Gornal

Roofing wrangle pair get fresh trial

MAGISTRATES have taken the rare step of ordering a fresh trial against two men they found guilty of using aggressive sales tactics.

The move by Dudley magistrates, to 'set aside' the convictions of company boss Edward Hogan and salesman Stewart Fawke, follows a complaint from defence lawyers that the finding of guilt was 'tainted'.

They said the magistrates had 'inadvertently' seen a statement by a key prosecution witness and that they should have relied only upon the evidence given in court.

Denied

Hogan, aged 56, of Derby, and Fawke, 46, of Shirley Road, Cotteridge, Birmingham, who had denied the charges against them, were found guilty last month.

They appeared in court last week for sentencing. But Mr David Campbell, for Hogan and his company Roofguard Protective Coatings Ltd, said he was concerned that a statement not agreed by the defence but handed in by the prosecution had been taken into account.

Fawke's defence lawyer, Ben Williams, said the magistrates had inadvertently been given the statement and, as a result, the decision was 'tainted'.

It had been alleged by Dudley Trading Standards that Hogan and Fawke pressured a retired couple in Halesowen to sign up for roof coating work costing £2,883 and made a false promise that it would prevent up to 40 per cent heat loss.

Charities run a restaurant

A RESTAURANT has been relaunched by two charities after a facelift.

Vines Social Enterprises and Living Springs invited VIPs to their official opening in High Street, Stourbridge.

The venue, previously known as The Well, was opened as a trial run for customers after a refurbish before its official opening.

Vines Social Enterprises helps young people into work at its restaurants whilst Living Springs, at Stourton, supports young mums and vulnerable families.

It will be open 8.30am to 4pm Monday to Saturday.

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Police get tough on yob gangs

POLICE have been granted new powers to tackle troublemakers on a Dudley estate following complaints about anti-social behaviour.

A dispersal order has been put in place for Kates Hill and means officers can move on groups if they are suspected of causing a nuisance.

They can also take under-16s found hanging around home to their families between 9pm and 6am.

Patrols

Police will be carrying out extra patrols to ensure gangs are dealt with and the order is enforced.

It will run for six months and covers Price Street, St Johns Road, Highview Street, Peel Street, Oliver Close, Bishops Close, Grove Street, East Street, Cromwell Street, Watsons Close, George Close, Sharrington Close, Brereton Close, Leveson Walk and Leveson Close.

The action was welcomed by Deb Brownlee, chairman of the St John's Church Preservation Group in Kates Hill. She said: "Although St John's itself has not been directly affected by this recent anti-social behaviour, other than the massive litter problem which we have to clean up around St John's daily, we welcome any move that will make the area safer."

In May, a dispersal order was introduced in Dudley Wood following complaints from residents about street drinking, fighting and vandalism.

Anti-social behaviour can be reported by calling 101.

Canal death heart theory

A PENSIONER whose body was found in a canal may have suffered a heart attack and fallen in, an inquest heard.

The body of 70-year-old retired machinist Michael Merideth was discovered in a lock at Smethwick on January 15.

His niece, Linda Unitt, of Hagley Road, Halesowen, told the inquest he may have been out taking pictures using a new smartphone.

Dr Sunil Muzaffar, a pathologist from Sandwell Hospital, said Mr Merideth, of Thimblemill Road, Smethwick, had suffered a sudden cardiac arrest on the day he died. Senior Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain recorded a verdict of accidental death.

'Last throw of the dice' on stadium deal

SPEEDWAY bosses have confirmed riders will continue to race at its temporary home but admitted they faced a 'last throw of the dice' to secure a deal for a new stadium.

Cradley Heathens have enjoyed success on the track securing the National League title with bumper crowds of more than 1,000 fans packing into race meetings.

Club officials have been working hard on their long term search for a new permanent stadium while continuing to hold fixtures in Wolverhampton.

Heathens chairman Nigel Pearson says club managers met last week over a 'last throw of the dice' in plans for a new stadium.

Officials have identified a location and have taken guidance from a planning expert who says regulations would allow for a new track to be built at the site.

Viable

But Mr Pearson said the club need to secure the co-operation of landowners in order to draw up a detailed plan to present a viable proposal to develop the site.

However he moved to assure speedway

fans that as long as support for the club is there, officials will continue to promote meetings at Monmore Green Stadium.

"Our planning experts have advised us that, although it would not be plain sailing, the location would meet planning requirements for a stadium," said Mr Pearson, who combines his role with working as a sports broadcaster and journalist.

"There has been a lot going on behind the scenes and there was concerns as it has taken longer than was expected, though no-one's fault but our own."

"However we have drawn up an action

plan about what needs to be done next in order to get some progress.

"If we don't get to take this particular any further then it would be our last throw of the dice for a new track."

"We want supporters to know we are doing everything we possible to pursue these plans."

"But we want to assure fans supporting us in massive numbers that we will happily continue to promote races in Wolverhampton."

"We are not going to walk away as long as the fans continue to support the club."

Call for centre at hospital to replace walk-in clinic

PLANS to shut a walk-in centre have moved forward with health bosses recommending it is replaced with a new urgent care centre at Russells Hall Hospital.

Paul Maubach, Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) chief officer, said it was the board's preferred option for the town after a public consultation. But the news angered some councillors who said the move goes against the wishes of patients who want to keep the Holly Hall clinic in Stourbridge Road. Some fear it would put extra pressure on the hospital.

by Heather Large

Speaking to members of Dudley Council's health scrutiny committee, Mr Maubach said the new centre would work alongside the accident and emergency department and be available 24 hours, seven days a week for patients to walk in or make appointments.

Improved

He told the committee it would be 'an improved' service. He also said the move would help to reduce pressure on A&E as the centre could be used by the thousands of non-urgent patients who currently turn up at the department. It would free medical staff for more serious cases.

"There was a strong message from the public that they like having a walk-in centre so we need to keep a walk-in centre facility," he said. "But we are recommending the walk-in should be part of the new urgent care centre. What we want to do is to enhance that we have. We have the opportunity to create a 24/7 walk-in centre."

But Councillor Bryan Cotterill said he believed the proposals went against the wishes of the patients.

More than 3,000 people responded to the consultation to give their views on the plans. Hundreds signed a petition calling for the centre to remain open.

"This consultation has been a complete and utter waste of time. It's just been to make it look like people are being listened to. There not been one person I've spoken to who has said they want the walk-in centre at Russells Hall," he said.

"All of these people, the two MPs, the councillors - you can't possibly have listened to them?" he added.

Councillor Derrick Hemmingsley said: "I think we all feel that by shutting this centre you're going to push all the eggs into one basket at Russells Hall."

Councillor Karen Jordan said she was concerned it could exacerbate parking problems at the hospital, where she said it can be difficult to find a space. There have also been long-standing problems with roads around the hospital being clogged up by parked cars.

Mr Maubach said one way to mitigate parking pressures would be to introduce a booking system. Councillor Liz Walker said she believed parking shortages could be resolved by staggering visiting times and clinics.

Committee chairman Sue Rideney asked for more information. Officers and GPs will be sharing the results of consultation at a meeting on February 13, from 5.30pm until 7.30pm at Brierley Hill Civic Hall.



Wagner has tattooed fiancée Lydia Longville with a cross with roses and signature Nanna

X-Factor star is now a tattooist

HE wowed X Factor audiences with his flamboyant singing, punctuated with enthusiastic flourishes of bongo playing. Now Brazilian-born Wagner Fiuze-Carvalho, aged 57 and living in Halesowen, has turned himself into an different kind of artist - a tattooist.

Wagner, who became a cult phenomenon during his 2010 run on the TV talent show, is still in show business, with a recent cameo appearance along with other well-loved contestants in last year's final. But he now has another string to his bow after qualifying as a registered tattoo artist.

He is offering his services to customers at his friend Simon Spencer's SS Tattoos studio, next to the Paragon muscle and fitness centre on the Dawley Trading Estate off Stallings Lane, Kingswinford.

There Wagner is working alongside his 22-year-old fiancée, Lydia Longville, who offers a tooth-whitening service.

Wagner, a former PE and martial arts teacher who lived in Pensnett at the height of his X Factor fame, is a fan of tattoos - having seven himself, ranging from eagles and panthers to dragons, snakes and swords.

NEWS

in brief

Lucky escapes from kitchen fires

FIRECREWS attended two kitchen fire at homes in the Dudley area.

A woman and her two children escaped their home in Bath Road, Quarry Bank, before firefighters arrived but the building was heavily smoke-logged on Saturday night. Just 90 minutes later a second blaze, in Beachcroft Road, Kingswinford, was caused by an electrical fault in a fridge. Crew commander Peter Cherrington said neither home had smoke alarms. "It is lucky that in both cases, the occupants were still awake and noticed the fires," he said.

Police arrest two over car crimes

TWO men have been arrested by police in connection with a string of car crimes in the Black Country.

The men, aged 30 and 25, from Tipton, are being held in custody following their arrest in the early hours of Friday morning.

Three vehicle burglaries took place between January 15 and 17. A black Volkswagen Passat was stolen from Rowley Regis and two Vauxhall Corsas were taken during car key burglaries in Brierley Hill and Wordsley.

Inquest adjourned during court case

AN inquest on church minister Rev John Bedford and his wife Audrey, of Kingsway, Oldbury, who died in a crash near their home on May 23 has been adjourned by coroner Robin Balmain, while court proceedings take place. Damon Richardson, 23, of Church Hill, Frankley Green, is charged with causing death by dangerous driving and will appear in court on April 3.

Market in line for eco-friendly boiler

A MOVE to install an environmentally-friendly boiler at a market have been given the go-ahead.

The biomass boiler, which generates heat from products such as wood, has been earmarked for Bilston Market.

Pub to get revamp and an extension

THE White Horse pub in Dudley Street, Sedgley is to reopen after undergoing a refurbishment.

Amber Taverns has been given permission for a single-storey rear extension to the building.

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NEWS

THE BEST
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MAXIMUM respect to Chris Packham, posing on *Winwatch* (BBC2) with an enormous golden eagle on his arm. There is absolutely no guarantee that a bird so big and strong will not develop a sudden taste for human noses.

□□□□□□□□

FRED Pring died of heart failure in his north Wales home. An inquest heard this week how his wife made frantic 999 calls but paramedics nearby were on 'mandatory and undisturbable' rest breaks. When did a patient's life become less important than a paramedic's tea and buns? A reader tells me he had a blazing row on the phone a couple of years back when his partner fell ill but the ambulance service insisted the symptoms didn't merit an ambulance. He contacted his doctor who whistled up an ambulance PDQ. When his partner got to hospital she was found to have a perforated bowel, peritonitis and heart failure.

□□□□□□□□

WE TOOK our old moggie for his annual cat-flu jab and he has not been the same cat since. As I write this he's in full flump-mode, lying on the warm top of the stove as limp as a rag. An online search reveals that loss of appetite and inactivity are common side effects of the annual booster injections and there's some debate as to whether older cats really need them. Pet-insurance companies insist on these jobs but what do vets think?

□□□□□□□□

IT WAS one of those Should've Gone to Specsavers moments. I thought the headline said: "Blair tries to arrest Blair." I felt a brief moment of joy that, as every other inquiry and legal process seems to have failed dismally, the Caped Crusader of Gotham City was at last fingering the former prime minister's collar. No such luck. On closer reading, it was not Blair but a barman at a London restaurant. Twiggy Garcia tried unsuccessfully to make a citizen's arrest on Blair for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Blair apparently attempted to turn the conversation around with a breezy: "I think you should be more concerned about Syria." That's a typical bit of Blairism. If things get sticky, let's all smile, bluster, change the subject and move on. The problem for about 500,000 Iraqis is that the only place they moved on to was the grave. There will be a reckoning, Tone.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

£2m funding aims to help elderly stay at home longer

A £2 million grant will be ploughed into helping older people in Dudley live at home for longer

Housing bosses have received the cash injection – one of the biggest in the country – to help with projects across the borough to enable people to live independently in their own homes.

by Simon Stone

Officials from Dudley Council said they were delighted with the grant, which will provide help and support to older residents in the borough.

Dudley Council received the cash through the Disabled Facilities Grant. It is the fifth highest amount out of all 36 metropolitan boroughs with only Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds receiving more funding from the government-backed scheme.

Dudley Home Improvement Service will use the money to provide facilities in people's homes to allow them to remain as independent as possible.

People are able to source money from the council if they are disabled and need to make changes to their home, including widening doors, and installing ramps, stairlifts or a downstairs bathroom. Grants can also be used for installing or adapting a heating system or lighting for easier use.

Dudley Council's housing boss Councillor Steve Waltho, said: "Many older people want to live inde-

pendently in their own home for as long as possible and therefore the suitability, condition and adaptation of the home is really important. Often people are on low incomes and it is vital we play a big part in supporting them by adapting their homes to meet their needs.

"I'm delighted that we have received the money, but not only that, we have received one of the highest grants in the country."

The council's home improvement service provides a repair, improvement and adaptation service to help vulnerable home owners and private tenants remain at home. Staff provide advice and assistance including organising works using approved contractors. The service helps with funding through equity release, loans, charitable funding and grants.

Write to Dudley Home Improvement Service, Harbour Buildings, Waterfront West, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 1 LN; call 01384 817086 or email psh.housing@dudley.gov.uk

New bins rolling out across borough



Refuse worker Nick Emery and Councillor Tracy Wood with some new bins and bags

WHETHER it is black, green or blue, residents are to receive new wheellie bins and recycling bags.

Tens of thousands of homes will receive wheellie bins across Dudley borough during the final phase of a £2.5 million project.

A series of improvements are also planned for services to enable people to recycle plastic bottles and cardboard from the kerbside.

More

Residents will use their blue bag for paper and card, green bag for plastic bottles and cans and existing black box for glass.

Environment boss, Councillor Tracy Wood, said: "The new service enables us to collect more recycling from the kerbside."

Homes in Lower Gornal, Cradley, Dudley, Halesowen and Brierley Hill are included in the final phase. People will be encouraged to recycle through an incentive scheme.

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Children's services remaining a target for council budget cuts

CUTS to children's services will continue Dudley Council chiefs have warned – despite money-saving plans to shut children's centres being scrapped.

Proposals to reduce services at some of the borough's 20 children's centres have been tabled by bosses searching for savings on budgets. The initial plans to axe seven centres, including Hob Green, in Pedmore, Stourbridge, were scrapped following a public outcry.

A consultation continued identifying areas where the authority could make savings. But the U-turn means the amount saved in the next financial year will drop from £2.3 million to £1.5m. Children's services boss Councillor Tim Crumpton said the authority was still looking at other ways to make savings.

"We know we need to make more savings but how we do that is up for grabs but not necessarily up to children centre services to provide it," he said. "There will be, however, more savings needed in the following year."

Students in poppy drive raise £640

STUDENTS are delighted after raising hundreds of pounds to support the Royal British Legion's poppy appeal.

Those taking public services courses at Halesowen College collected a total of £646 for the charitable cause helping servicemen and women.

They attended a small ceremony in Halesowen to help the Royal British Legion to launch their 2013 Poppy Appeal.

And the college also held a special parade and marked Remembrance Day with a two minutes silence.

It comes as the council's overview and scrutiny committee agreed recommendations for an alternative model for running children's centres in the borough.

The proposal includes keeping all 20 open, but merging their management into five 'cluster' centres – Brierley Hill, Dudley Central, Dudley North, Halesowen and Stourbridge.

The number of managers is set to be reduced with one senior boss responsible for each of the five centres. The changes see more services such as credit unions, health clinics and community groups to use the centres.

During the meeting, opposition Conservative Councillor David Caunt, said: "If you are out there, you know how well children's centres are appreciated by those who use them. But it did seem to come as a bit of a surprise to those who

by Andrew Turton

oversee these centres that there was this furore immediately the announcement was made.

Councillor Zafar Islam added: "The consultation has shown the true value of the children's centres in the borough and made us realise how important they are."

Hours may be reduced at the centres although bosses told the meeting that many services were already based at families' homes.

Campaigner Kyra Hill, 25, who has a two-year-old daughter, Lilly, campaigned to save Quarry Bank children's centre from closure.

She said: "I am pleased they have listened to us rather than sweeping our views under the carpet."

Consultation results and recommendations will be considered by the council's cabinet on February 12.

Actors hope audience will want more



Members of Phoenix Theatre Company in costume up rehearsing for musical Oliver!

PERFORMERS are putting the final touches to their production as they tread the boards together for the first time.

The Phoenix Theatre Company will be putting on their own version of hit West End musical Oliver next month at The Mill Theatre, Dormston School, in Sedgley.

The group was formed in October 2012 and has members from across the Black Country.

Richard Bourne, the company's chairman and one of its founding members said: "This is our inaugural performance as a group and it's taken a lot of hard work to get where we are today. Everything is going really really well and audiences can look forward to a spectacular show."

The group will be performing from Tuesday, February 4, until Saturday, February 8, from 7.30pm each evening and 2.30pm during the Saturday matinee.

For tickets call 01902 897520 or email info@phoenixtheatreco.co.uk.

NEWS

in brief

Second busiest day at Merry Hill

MERRY Hill shopping centre experienced one of its busiest days since it opened 24 years ago.

Senior marketing manager Kelly Reed said: "Mega Monday on December 23 was busy from early morning through to midnight, with more than 150,000 customers taking advantage of stores starting sales early."

"This was Merry Hill's second busiest day since the centre opened 24 years ago. New Year's Day saw double digit growth year on year, as did Boxing Day."

TV is donated to hospital charity

ELECTRICAL store Apollo Birmingham in Handsworth has donated the set to Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals (SWBH) Charity. It will be installed in the relatives' room at the critical care unit at City Hospital.

The SWBH Charity funds additional facilities to enhance the experience of patients and their families across the SWBH Trust area, which also covers Sandwell and Rowley Regis hospitals.

History talk will be the first in a series

A SERIES of history talks taking place at Dudley's newly-opened archives Tipton Road. These start with Brian Draper MBE on the Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale area on February 6 at 7.30pm.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

BENEFITS Street, poverty porn, exploiting the most vulnerable members of society.

Apparently, the Channel 4 documentary has attracted 1,700 complaints, and now MP Austin Mitchell has waded into the debate, saying that programme makers had 'conned' people into appearing in the programme, and put them 'on show like animals in a zoo'.

Steady on there a bit, old boy. While I can certainly sympathise with the normal, law-abiding and hard-working residents of James Turner Street who were not selected to take part in the series because their lives were not colourful enough, and now have to live with the stigma of the way the street has been portrayed, I do think some of those in the series protest too much.

Certainly, some of the show's 'stars' - who claim they were duped by Channel 4 into appearing on the series - do not appear to have been too reticent in coming forward to other sections of the media.

But for those genuinely concerned about television's exploitation of the poor, weak and unintelligent, then I would be much more concerned with what ITV has planned for later in the year.

The network is planning to screen a reality series where deluded individuals are invited to humiliate themselves on national television, before being berated for their stupidity or ineptitude by multi-millionaire businessmen.

Candidates for the show are recruited on the pretext that they have a slim possibility of a career in showbusiness, and are rigorously vetted prior to their appearance to ensure there is just the right mix of oddballs.

Those participating are encouraged to plead for their continued presence in the show, especially if it includes a sob story about financial hardship or personal tragedy. Highlights of previous series have included a man who refused to budge after lying down on the stage, and a girl who punched her best mate in the face after receiving a tongue-lashing from the tycoon who rakes in millions from the show. X Factor is back for a new series in September.

I've never really got the games console thing. What makes grown men - and it is invariably men - want to sit for hours on end in front of a television screen fiddling around with a little plastic joystick has always been a bit of a mystery.

So the motives behind the man in Kansas who reportedly ran back into his burning house to rescue his Xbox is truly impossible to comprehend.

According to reports, the man had endangered his life. Assuming, of course, he had one to begin with.



Soul singer Beverly Knight



One Direction singer Liam Payne



Councillor Roger Lawrence



West Bromwich MP Tom Watson

Making sure that our region is done proud

DANIEL WAINWRIGHT looks at plans under way to celebrate the region's special day in 2014

A LONE flag flying outside a government office in London was no way to celebrate everything that is good about the Black Country.

Now plans are under way to make sure more is done to recognise the region's special day in 2014.

Dudley is already flying the official Black Country flag, designed by school pupil Gracie Sheppard, as the countdown begins to the official Black Country Day on July 14 - the anniversary of the invention of the Newcomen Engine.

Delighted

And with plenty for the Black Country to shout about - from food delicacies such as grae paes and bacon to stars such as One Direction's Liam Payne and Beverly Knight, who both hail from Wolverhampton - renewed calls are now being made to make sure the region is championed come July 14.

Dudley has long been acknowledged by many as the 'capital' of the Black Country - something which deputy council leader Pete Lowe is keen to celebrate by flying the flag which features a chain to represent the manufacturing heritage of the area.

The upright triangular shape in the background recalls the iconic glass cones and iron furnaces that were once commonplace throughout the region.

"All of us living and working in the area have plenty to be proud of and as



Gracie Sheppard, who was the designer, with councillor David Sparks, left, and councillor Pete Lowe who are showing off the flag

the capital of the Black Country here in Dudley we are determined to ensure we celebrate who and what we are," Councillor Lowe said.

"I for one am delighted to see that we will have a Black Country Day to celebrate each year and want to help ensure that in 2014 as many people as possible join in celebrations to recognise the area's achievements."

Watson led calls for a proper Black Country Day last year and has urged local authorities to do what they could in 2014 to make sure the day was one to remember: "I commend Dudley Council for its excellent leadership on this."

"It is a day when we can celebrate the cultural, economic and political influence of a very important region of the country."

Dudley Council leader David Sparks added: "Cornwall has a flag, Wales has a dragon, Scotland has its referendum and now we can proclaim that we are also a special place with a special culture."

"As the capital of the Black Country I hope Dudley borough people and organisations will show off the flag with great pride not only on July 14 but all year round."

Wolverhampton City Council also wants to join in the celebrations, but isn't flying a flag any time soon.

Activities

Council leader Roger Lawrence said: "I'm not even sure how we'd go about getting one. For all I know there's only one flag between us."

Walsall Council's leader Mike Bird added: "People think of the Black Country as a grimy, smoky and horrible place which it most definitely isn't. "We should celebrate our part in the industrial revolution."

To try and kick off the celebrations Dudley Council is working with community groups and traders throughout the borough to organise activities to mark the day. Councillor Lowe said the feedback so far had been positive.

The Black Country Living Museum has announced it will hold a Black Country weekend on July 12 and 13 with another celebratory evening taking place on September 13.

Smaller community events are also being planned.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1984

PART-time fireman David Bloomer was called out during the early hours of the morning - to fight a fire at his own house. A passer-by called the fire brigade during the early hours of the morning after seeing smoke drifting above the Bilbrook estate.

AROUND 20 girls at a Dudley school were sent home for wearing trousers, in defiance of uniform regulations. The fifth-formers at Mons Hill School said it was unfair that female teachers could wear trousers, but pupils had to wear skirts and stockings, regardless of the weather.

EDUCATION chiefs in Staffordshire took the first step towards banning corporal punishment in schools. But the canings would continue for the time being, until the Government brought in new legislation to comply with an edict from the European Court of Human Rights.

1994

IT was announced that the Queen was to visit Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall in the summer. She was scheduled to visit St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolves £14.5 million redevelopment at Molineux, as well as the new floodlit track at Wolverhampton Racecourse. She would also be dropping in at Walsall's Rainbow House hospice and opening a new visitor centre at Dudley Castle.

MEANWHILE, two shots were fired at the Prince of Wales in an Australian park. The gunman was wrestled to the ground, and the Prince coolly told officials later: "Don't worry, these things happen."

TELLY Savalas, the actor best remembered for playing the title role in the 1970s detective series Kojak, died at the age of 70.

2004

COMEDIAN Bobby Ball was presented with his own souvenir Express & Star front page as he celebrated his 60th birthday in Wolverhampton. The funnyman, one half of double-act Cannon and Ball, was appearing in Peter Pan at the theatre. He said he was thrilled and planned to put the framed front page in his attic bedroom. Referring to his comedy partner Tommy Cannon, he joked: "What's good about it is the fact that Tommy hasn't got one of these."

WOLVES pulled off their second Premier League shock in the space of a week, with Kenny Miller snatching a last-gasp equaliser at home to Liverpool. The unlikely 1-1 draw came hot on the heels of a 1-0 Molineux victory over Manchester United, where Miller had also been on the mark.

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LETTERS

Focus on village rail link

MAY I respond to the letter from Mr S. Pilborough which implies that the Stourbridge Line User Group (SLUG) has promoted the new, improved train service for Hartlebury to the detriment of Hagley. This is not the case.

SLUG exists to protect and develop train services for all stations along the line from Birmingham to Worcester. He has a legitimate case for complaint if his journey opportunity has been reduced but even under present arrangements, the number of Hagley-bound trains outstrips those of Hartlebury by far.

Changing trains is a part of everyday

Aynuk pays tribute to a 'proper mon'

IN 50 years, I have mixed with artists of all levels of fame, not all were 'real people', and one had to tolerate them, that's showbiz.

However, this did not apply to Steve Evans, he was, what we say in God's country, as a 'proper mon'.

It was a pleasure to be in his company. It is a most painful separation for family and friends but we must take strength in the assurance that we shall all be reunited someday, in a better place.

God bless you Steve, keep me a sate!

A SMITH (AYNUK)
Netherton
Dudley

Note: Steve Evans, 52, died after living with stomach cancer for more than two years. He gained more than 26,000 followers on Twitter and became a guest on TV and radio. His funeral service is at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Monday at 12.30pm.

life for the seasoned commuter. However, where a natural and traditional journey is a through service, then that should be retained. For this reason, SLUG will raise the issue with London Midland and try and bring about remedial action for the summer timetable.

Our own examination of the working timetable reveals that there may be some slack which would allow Worcester trains to call at Hagley. London Midland is a customer-focused company and I'm sure its management will co-operate with SLUG to restore the Hagley to Worcester seamless journey.

It is too early to assess patronage of

Hartlebury station or to make judgments. The initiative was as much that of London Midland as that of SLUG. Clearly the company sees a market there that can be exploited.

With the continuing growth in train patronage, it is wasteful to speed past stations which could put customers on trains.

I hope I have explained my position and that Mr Pilborough is satisfied with the course of action which the group will take. SLUG has no bias towards Hartlebury or Hagley.

ROB HEBBORN
Chairman
Stourbridge Line User Group

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle
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WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley.chrons@
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Make it easier to get rid of rubbish

HAVING been born in this wonderful town of Dudley, walking around it I notice with dismay how it had fallen into disarray. Empty shops wherever you looked.

Also on my travels I notice a lot of rubbish being left up alleyways, round the back of garages or any open spaces. How has this come about? Easy, the people of this town can't get rid of their rubbish. They can't burn it. To take it away is very expensive so, as a last resort, they dump it on the street and such places they can find.

Dudley had a good thing going, it was called the bulk load. The council came round when it first started, twice a year, then it came down to once a year. Then it finished altogether. Bring that back and you would have no more rubbish on the streets. So come on Dudley councillors, how about bringing the pride back to a great, wonderful town.

L LANGFORD
Beech Green
Dudley

Care and courtesy

WELL done Russells Hall Hospital! I needed to visit A & E Department on Sunday, I booked in at 1.15pm, seen by a doctor at 1.45pm, treated, given a prescription, collected my medication from the Pharmacy and was on my way home by 2.15pm. Grateful thanks to all the staff who looked after me with care and courtesy.

J CLEWS
Lerryn Close
Kingswinford

Euro in or out

SO Ken Turner and his clan have joined UKIP and will no doubt be campaigning in line with UKIP's manifesto of leaving Europe. Is this the same Ken Turner who during the last election spent 15 minutes on my doorstep trying to convince me wife and I that it would be disastrous for Britain if we left Europe? Glad to hear he has come round to our way of thinking!

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NEWS

Visitors needed by sight charity

A FRESH appeal for more volunteers has been launched by a charity that provides a home-visiting service for people with sight loss.

The Visually Impaired People project is run by the Pocklington Resource and Information Centre, in Stourbridge.

The charity's headquarters, which are behind Mary Stevens Hospice, in Oldswinford, serve the whole of Dudley borough.

Project

Bosses have run its Lottery-funded VIP project for almost three years. But in order to continue to provide its free home-visiting scheme for blind and sight-limited people, more volunteers are needed.

Volunteers typically visit residents in their own homes either weekly or fortnightly for about an hour and a half or two hours, offering company, assistance with reading and correspondence. Sometimes they accompany people on trips within their local community.

Jan Lacy, volunteer co-ordinator, said: "We have had great success with the services we provide but we are reliant on volunteers coming forward to offer their services. We are looking for people who have the time and willingness to offer support, are reliable, self-motivated and have good communication skills."

She added: "All volunteers will receive a full induction as part of the role and are then carefully matched to people with sight loss who have been referred into the service."



Carer support worker Pat Hill with, back, volunteer Marcus Reece and service user Wilhelmina Scanlon at the Thomas Pocklington Trust

The resource centre, based at the Mary Stevens Centre, off Hagley Road, is part of the Thomas Pocklington Trust. To find out more, including how to volunteer, call Jan Lacy on 01384 440333, or email jan.lacy@pocklington-trust.org.uk

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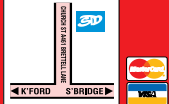
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One of Charles Grigg's greetings cards



A typical example of the mischievous postcards which he produced for 50 years



Bawdy humour was an integral part of the cards



The cartoonist from Oldbury with some of his work

Lifetime of laughter on the cards recalled as cartoonist Charles dies

A LEADING cartoonist and comic book artist who drew Korky the Cat for the cover of *The Dandy* for 20 years has died aged 97.

West Bromwich-born Charles Grigg, who also drew more than 200 saucy postcard designs, penned the adventures of Korky for the comic from 1962 right through until 1982.

A son of a railway fitter and born in 1916, Mr Grigg lived in Barnford Crescent, Oldbury, for many years from 1960 with his wife Margery before moving to Halesowen.

Beginning his working life as a woodworker apprentice at the age of 14, he began selling his cartoons to the Oldbury Weekly News before he was put in touch with DC Thomson, publisher of the Beano

by Adam Grinsell

and Dandy. His first comic creation, Sooty and His Shooter, appeared in the 500th issue of the Dandy in 1951, before he became a full-time artist for both comics.

As the artist for the famous cat, drawing the weekly strip, Mr Grigg was told by one editor that he had created the definitive Korky.

Albums

His longest running strip, Foxy, made its debut in the first issue of Topper in 1953, but went on to become a full-page strip and was included in the comic until 1976.

After retiring from his full-time work with *The Dandy* and *The Beano* aged 65, Mr Grigg restricted himself to the albums.

In an interview with the Express

& Star, aged 70, Mr Grigg said: "I would say that without exception I have done the album covers for more than 20 years."

"I think I have added my own character to what was already an established character but I can't define Korky. It's just part of what I do."

"I am quite an ordinary person. A lot of people remark on it and my answer is that it's a job, a profession, something I love doing but nothing more than a job."

Signing his name as 'Chas', Mr Grigg also drew saucy postcards for Bamforth and Co for more than 50 years, with some of the jokes reportedly being supplied by his wife.

Stephen, his son lived and looked after him for the last four years of his life, said: "It was my mum who would often come up with the ideas

for the dirty postcards. He was often more concerned about the artwork but he did have a good sense of humour."

"He was a very modest man. He never had a bad word to say about anyone."

"It was brilliant growing up being his son, I would tell everyone at school what my dad did. "We used to get all these free comics which was great, I remember them arriving and reading them in my bedroom. It was always magical and special looking at what dad had done."

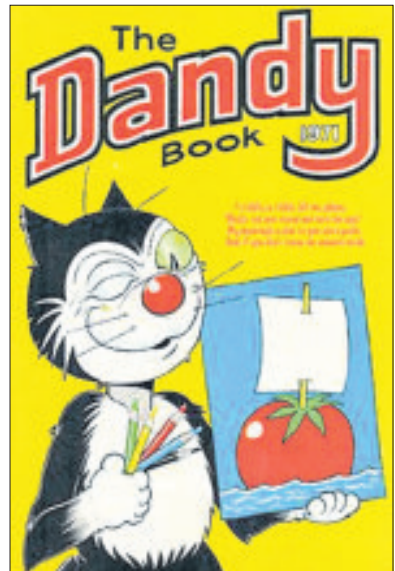
He added that his father, a life-long Albion fan, had once considered a career in football and even played for the Aston Villa Reserves during the Second World War, but decided to stick with his drawing working as an engineer at Henry Hope's in West Bromwich. He still

loved to paint and draw and I encouraged him to keep it up to help him with his dementia.

All you had to do was put a piece of paper in front of him and he would doodle," added the 64-year-old. His earliest published works were for two local papers, 'Rufus Rabbit' for the Oldbury Weekly News in 1945, and 'Billy Bone' for the Smethwick Telephone.

Despite suffering from vascular disease later in life, causing him to have problems with his short-term memory, Mr Grigg wrote down his life story which he would read through regularly, and look through artwork in more than 400 copies of *The Dandy* which he kept.

Charles, whose wife died in 2008, leaves his two sons Stephen and Roger.



Charles' Korky the Cat was the 'definitive' version

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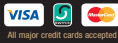
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CLUB NEWS

Money is presented to charity

SEDGLEY EVENING TWG

THE GUILD'S Arts and Crafts Group have an annual sale of work and this year excelled themselves by raising £1,000.

As the guild chairman's husband is suffering from Motor Neurone Disease it was decided that the money would be donated to this charity.

The guild meets on the third Monday of the month at 7pm where this usually a speaker, followed by a cup of tea and a biscuit to finish.

At the next meeting in February, Mark Williams will talk about the Cotwall End Valley.

Visitors and new members are always welcome. Meetings are held at Sedgley Community Centre in Ladies Walk.

Members try tai chi

BREWOOD WI

IT was nice to meet up again in January after all the hectic rush of Christmas and the New Year.

In an interesting and sometimes hilarious evening, the ladies heard about the benefits of Tai Chi as a recreation and then tried out some of the moves for themselves.

The club meets again on February 5 to hear from Albrighton Pottery.

Festive treats to a talk on sweets



Santas Colin Emery and Colin Babb with minutes secretary Chris Guest

CHAIRMAN Jane Emery welcomed Audrey Hall in November. She entertained members with her 'Christmas Miscellany', a varied and light-hearted evening to put everyone in the mood for Christmas.

Members enjoyed their three-course Christmas meal at Goodyear's Pavilion in December. They were treated to a free raffle and each member received a gift from the two Santas, before welcoming singer Sandy

CAMEO LADIES

Lawrence who entertained members to conclude a very enjoyable evening.

The first meeting of 2014 will be the AGM followed by "The History of Sweets" with Emma Scott on Monday, February 3, at the Mercure Goldthorn Hotel, at 7.45pm.

For further information contact 01902 844836 or 01902 330727.

Historic finds are handled

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MEMBERS and friends were welcomed by Dorothy Bailey and were pleased to learn there will be no subscription increase.

Jim Wall's talk 'The past beneath our feet' was extremely interesting. A keen member of the Bloxwich Research and Metal Detecting Club for

more than 30 years, he revealed not only slides of a very high quality but also treasures which he had unearthed from Bronze and Iron Age finds, through to Henry VIII's coins up to Vic-

torian times and the Second World War. Members were able to handle many of these including gold and silver coins and cannonballs from the Roundhead and Cavalier battles.

On February 13 at 7.30pm Alan Peace will talk on 'Never work with children and animals'.

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Nursery at former pub



Learning Journey Nursery owner Penny Virdee with Dudley South MP Chris Kelly help Callum Walker have fun at the nursery with other staff and children

AROUND 180 people applied for just seven jobs at a nursery which has reopened after its sudden closure brought redundancies and uncertainty for parents.

The Learning Journey Day Nursery, has opened in Pennsnett, Dudley, following more than £100,000 worth of investment to transform the building.

Owner Penny Virdee, 37, said the building had been empty since the previous nursery on the site closed in August – leaving around 30 children in need of a new place.

But now a nursery business, based in the converted Elephant and Castle pub, is back following a revamp and recruitment drive.

The nursery is holding an official open day on Saturday 1 between 10am and 2pm.

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly visited Miss Virdee to congratulate her. He said: "The Learning Journey nursery is a really welcome addition to childcare provision for hard-working mums and dads in our borough and I wish the venture well for the future."

Buyer is found for landmark office complex

A LANDMARK office building at the heart of a business complex has been acquired by a developer ready to be transformed into luxury apartments.

Point North was once earmarked as the new home for West Brom Building Society before a deal fell through just over 12 months ago.

The building stands as the focal point for the canalside complex in Brierley Hill, which has struggled after several blue chip firms pulled out of the site.

Entrepreneur

Developer Richardsons Capital, established by entrepreneur brothers Roy and Don Richardson, has sold the building to Seven Capital, which has offices in Birmingham. Seven Capital have submitted early plans to gain permission for a change of use of the building, which has been empty since online finance firm Egg moved out. This would allow the firm to redevelop the complex for a residential use, including apartments.

Plans have been lodged with Dudley Council's planning department with a decision expected in coming weeks.

Both Oldbury-based Richardsons Capital and

by Andrew Turton

Seven Capital refused to be drawn on details of the deal, which was secured this month.

Seven Capital announced its deal through its Twitter feed, saying: "Point North, Merry Hill acquired from Richardsons Capital. 100k sqft overlooking waterfront. Great start to 2014!"

But a spokesman for Seven Capital said they would not be making a further comment at this stage but would release more information in the near future.

The investment company are working on major developments both in the UK and abroad. They have brokered a deal with an Australian hotel chain to develop £100 million plans for a luxury hotel at Five Ways on Birmingham's Broad Street entertainment district.

Dudley Council leader, Councillor David Sparks, today said: "There is huge pressures to provide more housing because governments of all compositions have failed to deliver enough housing for decades. Therefore, when there are vacant buildings that may be suitable for conversion, it is inevitable that people will look to changing such buildings to residential purposes."

Work starts on West Coast main line overhaul – setback for HS2 opponents

WORK has started on an overhaul of one of the busiest railway lines in Europe in the latest phase of a £250 million scheme to speed up journeys.

The upgrades on the West Coast main line will help provide faster, more frequent and reliable trains between Stafford and Crewe, with a knock-on effect for services through Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Dudley, Lichfield and Rugeley.

The programme will see new signalling installed in and around Stafford Station and a new freight loop built which will free up space for more passenger services on the route which is used by millions of people every month.

The majority of the work will take place at

weekends and overnight, with the new service due to be fully operational by summer 2015.

Ian Jones, Network Rail programme manager and head of the Staffordshire Alliance, which is responsible for delivering the works, said: "The resignalling of Stafford is part of a wider package of investment in the West Coast main line between Stafford and Crewe which, when complete, will help to boost reliability and capacity and remove one of the last remaining bottlenecks on the route."

"Alongside line-speed improvements currently being delivered between Crewe and Stafford, these upgrades will mean a more reliable, faster and frequent service."

Another phase would see the construction of a flyover at Norton Bridge near Stafford which would untangle the existing lines and take Birmingham to Manchester trains up and over the main line rather than across it. The Transport Secretary is due to make a decision on this by April 14.

Europe

Meanwhile, opponents to HS2 have vowed to continue to fight the high speed rail scheme after suffering their biggest setback to date.

Campaigners said they would challenge the Government's £50 billion scheme as it goes through Parliament – and have mooted taking action via Europe.

It comes after the Supreme Court last week dismissed claims that the Government had cut corners and failed to comply with EU law in regards to assessing environmental damage.

They also ruled that there was no need for the court to refer the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

HS2 Action Alliance director Hilary Wharf said: "We always knew this would be a long fight. We will continue to press the Government to meet its environmental obligations. The Government should be safeguarding our environment for future generations and it is simply the fact that HS2 is an unnecessary, hugely damaging project environmentally."

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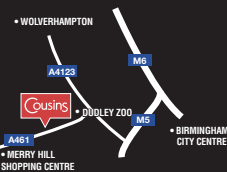
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Beginners: Fri 28th Feb. 12.00-14.00 5 wks. £26.30 #.
 Intermediates: Thurs 27th Feb. 19.00-21.00 7 wks. £36.80 #.

DRAWING FOR BEGINNERS

Mon 24th Mar. 14.30-16.30. 3 wks. £22.30 #

Short'N'Sweet

FLORAL ARTS: MOTHER'S DAY DELIGHT

Thurs 27th Mar. 14.30-16.30. 3 wks. £28.30 # (£11.00)

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Beginners: Tues 4th Mar. 19.00 - 21.00. 6 wks. £49.40 #

CANAL ART: ROSES AND CASTLES

Mon 24th Feb. 19.00-21.00 5 wks £26.30 #

JEWELLERY MAKING

Tues 25th Feb. 9.30-11.30 5 wks. £26.30 #

RAG RUG MAKING

Thurs 6th Mar. 14.30-16.30 3 wks. £22.30 #

Short'N'Sweet

FACE PAINTING AND GLITTER TATTOOS

Beginners: Thurs 27th Feb. 19.00-21.00. 7 wks. £43.90 # (£12)
 Improvers: Mon 24th Feb. 19.00-21.00. 7 wks. £43.90 # (£12)

SEWING MADE SIMPLE

Day: Tues 25th Feb. 14.30-16.30. 7 wks. £36.80 #
 Eve. Thurs 27th Feb. 18.00-20.00. 7 wks. £36.80 #

START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Tues 11th Feb. 19.00-21.00 8 wks. £42.10 # (no class 18th Feb)

EMERGENCY FIRST AID

Fri. 7th Feb. OR Sat. 22nd Mar. Both 09.00-16.00. 1 day. £37.60

PAEDIATRIC EMERGENCY FIRST AID

Sat 8th Feb. OR Fri. 21st Mar. Both 09.00-13.00. 1/2 day £25.10

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April. 2014 courses: May be subject to availability. When you call we will either register your interest. OR if places are available confirm your booking and take payment.

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Mon 28th Apr. 14.30-16.30. 3 wks. £22.30 #

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FRENCH

Improvers 1: Mon 28th Apr. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks £52.60 #

Cont. Beginners: Tues 29th Apr. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks £52.60 #

ARABIC: BEGINNERS

Mon 28th Apr. 12.00-14.00. 10 wks £52.60 #

NEW SAPPHO TO 'SHADES'

Tues 29th Apr. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks £52.60 #

INTRO TO SIGN LANGUAGE

Mon 28th Apr. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks £52.60 #

SIMPLE SPREADSHEETS:

Tues 6th May 14.30-16.30 3 wks £22.30 #.

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Thurs 1st May. 19.00-21.00 (no class 29th May & 5th June) 7 wks. £51.90 #

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Beginners: Thurs 1st May 18.00-19.00. 10 wks. £31.00 #

Beg. @ Oakfield: Fri 2nd May 10.00-11.00. 10 wks. £37.10 #

Improvers: Tues 29th Apr. 19.00-20.00. 10 wks. £31.00

Improvers: Wed 30th Apr. 18.30-19.30. 10 wks. £31.00

Improvers: Thurs 1st May 19.05-20.05. 10 wks. £31.00

Improvers: Thurs 1st May 20.10-21.10. 10 wks. £31.00

LEGS, BUMS & TUMS

Tues 29th Apr. 20.05-21.05, 10 wks. £31.00

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ADULT SWIMMING LESSONS:

Classes start Mon 28th Apr. for 10 wks. Beginners: 19.00-19.45.

Improvers: 19.45-20.30. Intermediates/Advanced: 20.30-21.15.

All £30.90 #

PLAY THE GUITAR

Intermediates: Mon 28th Apr. 19.00-21.00 10 wks. £52.60 #

Improvers: Tues 29th Apr. 19.00-21.00 10 wks. £52.60 #

Cont. Beginners: Thurs 1st May. 19.00-20.00 10 wks. £37.10 #

NEW Beginners: Thurs 1st May. 20.00-21.00 10 wks. £37.10 #

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Wed 30th Apr. 9.30 - 11.30. 10 wks. £52.60 #

Thurs 1st May 10.00 - 12.00. 10 wks. £52.60 #

Thurs 1st May 13.30 - 15.30. 10 wks. £52.60 #

PATCHWORK

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UPHOLSTERY

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Mon 28th Apr. 19.00-21.00. OR Tues 29th Apr. 12.00-14.00. OR

Wed 30th Apr. 12.00-14.00. All 10 wks. £52.60 #

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Wed. 19.00-20.00, Sun. 9.00-10.00. £4.00

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FACE PAINTING

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HOLIDAY CRAFTS

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Police can't tell when crime has been committed on the estate



A broken window and a shabby woodwork with peeling paint



Eyesore – Trafalgar Court in Tividale is rundown, overgrown and vandalised with evidence of fly-tipping

Legal bid to gain control of estate

A LEGAL challenge is being launched to take over a housing estate which police said was in such a state of disrepair, they cannot tell if vandalism had taken place or not.

The owner of eight out of nine blocks of flats at Trafalgar Court, off New Birmingham Road, Tividale, is Trafalgar Court Property Ltd, which has previously been fined tens of thousands of pounds for failure to deal with repairs.

Now a legal bid is being launched for the leaseholders, private landlords who own a few flats each, to have the right to manage the estate in the owners' place.

Barclay Property Services, of Hagley Road, Bearwood, is acting for those private landlords. If the challenge is successful, it will allow them to carry out repairs. Trafalgar Court Property Ltd have failed to do.

The challenge is expected to cost around £5,000 and needed more than half of the owners to back it.

Support

John Walker, owner of Barclay Property Services, said he had the support of the owners of 28 out of 55 flats so far.

A decision is not expected for several months on the challenge, which comes under the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

Mr Walker said: "Some of the landlords want the right to manage the estate so they can tackle disrepair in its communal areas."

"They want to see improvements around the grounds of the estate, the blocks of flats' roofs and other external features."

"I'm a specialist in this legislation and 28 of the owners of the flats are interested in pursuing this."

People living on the estate, which is made up of a series of flats on top of garages, say a number of the properties are vacant and being targeted by nuisance children.

One resident, 45-year-old Leigh Clarke, said: "People are very close to one another on this estate and look after each other."

"If it looked a bit cleaner and tidier people might not be coming in and smashing it up."

Windows are broken at many of the homes, window

frames are rotting and many of the vacant flats have been boarded up in a bid to stop break-ins.

No damage was actually recorded as a crime there in the last year, said police, although some of the buildings are in such a poor state it is difficult to tell if they have been subject to crime.

The poor state of the road has previously been raised by Sergeant Sam Archer, who is responsible for the neighbourhood.

She said: "Trafalgar Court, Tividale, is in a shocking state."

"We are having reports of crime occurring but due to the poor state of the premises and garages we cannot tell if the reports are legitimate or not."

She added: "We will be contacting local landlords and also Sandwell Council to see how we can work to improve the location."

Trafalgar Court Property Ltd was previously told to pay £45,900 for failing to carry out repairs to dangerous stairs, walkways and porches.

Then last July it was fined a further £16,800 for not fixing the problems. It was one of the largest penalties handed to a landlord for such offences.

Councillor Ian Jones, borough regeneration chief, welcomed the move by owners. He said: "Perhaps there is some light at the end of a long, dark tunnel for the people living at Trafalgar Court."

"There would be an incentive for these leaseholders to keep their properties in good repair, if this was successful."

"This could be good news and we will wait to see the outcome. I wish them well."

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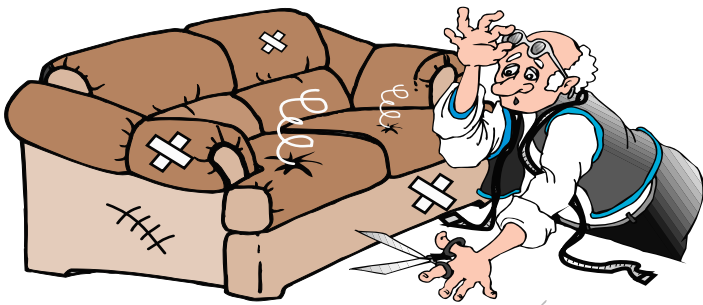
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NEWS

Electrical storm blasts homes causing blazes



Firefighters seen at a hole blasted in a roof by lightning



Dave and Sonia Simmonds at their Oakfield Road home

A LIGHTNING bolt struck two houses in a Stourbridge street – causing a roof fire and leaving many residents without electricity.

People living in Oakfield Road in Wollescote have spoken of a flash followed by a huge bang that shook the ground following the lightning strike on Saturday afternoon.

The lightning hit Dave and Sonia Simmonds' home, before striking the roof of a semi-detached home three doors down and causing a major fire in the roof at about 2.40pm.

It is believed a family, who live in the second house struck by lightning were away in but a woman was inside and was treated for smoke inhalation.

A mother and her two children in an attached house were evacuated. They had only moved in six months ago but are now being housed in a hotel, neighbours say.

Mr and Mrs Simmonds were shopping at Aldi when they heard the lightning strike. Minutes later, Mr Simmonds' friend called him to say his house had been struck.

Smoke

"We heard it while in the shop, everyone did, then my mate called me up to tell me he saw the lightning come down on my house," the 55-year-old retired firefighter said. "We drove back and saw the smoke coming up from the street, we turned in and I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the house on fire. We were lucky it just hit our

aerial and took the cabling down."

Many of the couple's electrical appliances were broken by the lightning including two televisions, DVD player, Xbox game console and central heating boiler. Mr Simmonds said: "We just feel lucky, it could have been much worse."

More than 20 firefighters attended Oakfield Road. They used hydraulic cranes to tackle the fire from the property's first floor, leaving five hours later. The badly damaged house was gutted with a hole in the roof and its windows blackened.

The freak thunder and lightning storm, followed by huge hailstones, caused a fire at Cotwall End Road, Sedgley, when an electric meter exploded as a house was also hit by lightning, causing two fires inside the detached property.

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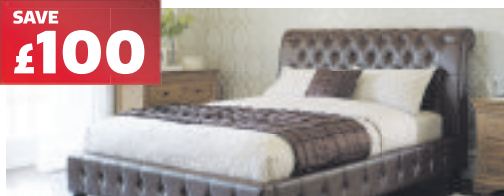
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NEWS FEATURE

Hero soldier's First World War medals rediscovered

FIRST World War medals belonging to a soldier who fought in the conflict have been re-discovered by his family.

Albert Wayne, of Burntwood, first found the medals belonging to his wife's uncle, George Humphrey Page – who was killed in combat – along with a letter from King George V, while clearing out his late mother-in-law's home.

After storing them away in a suitcase in the loft for three decades, the 77-year-old only discovered them again when his late wife Beryl died in 2012.

The father-of-two and grandfather of six said he had a 'nice surprise' when he opened the case.

Framed

He said he was shocked to come across them for a second time: "I first found the medals 30 years ago when my late wife Beryl and I cleared out my mother-in-law's house."

"It was quite a shock when we saw them, but we put them away for safekeeping and we didn't think about them again."

"When Beryl died just over a year ago, I went up in to the loft to fetch something and that is when I found them again."

"It was a nice surprise but now I am unsure of what to do with them."

"The medals are still in their original boxes and the letter from King George is framed and has Buckingham Palace written at the top."

"It was addressed to George's father who lived in Audnam, Wordsley, in Stourbridge. It must have been awful for him to have to receive such a letter."

Mr Page was enlisted in the Welsh Regiment but he was killed in combat in 1917 aged 29.

The two medals awarded to Mr Page were



Looking at items belonging to his wife's uncle, Black Country Private George Humphrey Page, is Albert Wayne, of Burntwood

the 1914-15 Star and the Great War for civilisation medal, which was awarded to his family once the war had ended.

After his death, Mr Page's family was also given a commemorative memorial plaque.

Mr Wayne said he knew little about Mr Page's role in the war or where he is buried.

But he added: "I have a son and a daughter who think it is wonderful that they are related to George and I have told my six grandchildren all about him because I want them to know about their family history."

Mr Wayne added: "Sadly my wife never got to meet her uncle and we will never know what he looked like."



The final resting place in Belgium of Private Page



Items in the name of Private Page, including medals and a letter from King George V

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NEWS

National body praises £6m history centre

A NEW £6 million archives and local history centre has been praised by the prestigious National Archives for the way it helps people to understand the past.



Jayne Wilkins, head of services at Dudley Council, Dr Matt Greenhall and assistant archivist Helen Donald



Project archivist Rachael Marsay from Yorkshire at the archives centre looking at the Earl of Dudley exhibition

The centre, which opened in Dudley this month, was recently visited by Dr Matt Greenhall, engagement manager from The National Archives, who described it as 'an exciting' service for the borough.

The centre, which is in Tipton Road, was the first public building to be built by the council for 20 years and has been part funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Investment

Dr Greenhall, engagement manager from The National Archives, said: "The National Archives welcomes the £6m investment into the new archives centre by Dudley Council and its partners."

"This new building is a valuable addition to the archival landscape of the West Midlands and will offer opportunities for people to engage more closely with the fascinating history of Dudley borough and the wider Black Country."

"The National Archives looks forward to working with colleagues from Dudley's archives as they look to develop an exciting new service for the borough and the wider region."

Councillor Stuart Turner, cabinet member responsible for archives said: "I'm very proud that our new borough archives centre is being recognised and praised by such an esteemed organisation as The National Archives."

The centre houses IT and public wi-fi services, education and conference rooms, a rare-book library and a research area.

Vietnamese 'skunk' gang members sent to prison

EIGHT members of a Vietnamese gang have been jailed after operating a 'skunk' cannabis empire capable of producing hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of drugs from six West Midlands addresses.

Trang Le, aged 26, who ran the operation with her boyfriend - Hung Nguyen, 34 - laundered £130,000 in just two months last year, a judge heard. He was already in jail over another cannabis growing racket but continued to 'manage' the enterprise from behind bars, giving her written advice on cultivating the drugs by referring to the plants as children, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Hidden

Others involved were couriers and gardeners but benefited from the racket with official receipts revealing its 33-year-old banker, Thanh Doan, paid out more than £17,000 in four days to the 'brothers and sisters of the company,' explained Mr John Evans, prosecuting.

Some of the women had £1,400 Louis Vuitton handbags, while one of the men had almost £10,000 cash hidden in his bedroom. All were in this country illegally.

Mr Evans said: "It was cannabis production on a near industrial scale with the capacity to cultivate 30 kilograms of skunk per crop and up to four crops a year. Trang Le was the person effectively running the operation."

The gang was exposed after police raided a house in Rosedale Avenue, Smethwick, and discovered a 'sophisticated cannabis growing facility'. There were more than 200 plants and 613 seedlings under cultivation while 4.5 kilograms of skunk was packed in a suitcase to be delivered to London.

Documents also disclosed that the premises had been rented by Trang Le prompting a police swoop on the flat she shared with her partner in Hagley Road West, Smethwick, where they discovered £1,500 cash, the keys to the Rosedale Avenue address and an iPhone with details of other properties where drugs were being grown.

These were at West Boulevard, Quinton; Reservoir Road, Oldbury; Hagley Road West, Bearwood; Wolverhampton Street, Darlaston; and Baldwins Lane, Hall Green.

The gang had either overstayed permits to visit this country or been smuggled on the back of a lorry and several were sharing an up-market flat in The Hemisphere, Edgbaston.

Nguyen was jailed for four years 10 months, Le received three years four months, Doan three years, Vo two years nine months, while three 'gardeners' Anh Tran, 32, Nhi Hoang, 22, and Hien-thi Mai were each given two years. Courier Thuy Duong, 48, received 18 months custody. All were of no fixed address.

All the defendants admitted conspiracy to produce cannabis, except Doan who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to convert criminal property, an offence that Le also admitted.

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IF you are watching the Bletchley Circle on TV then this break may be of interest as it brings to life the clandestine operations, Enigma machines, and tales of spies and deception on the visit to Bletchley Park.

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Free time in the city of Oxford is also on the itinerary where one of the grandest colleges, Christ Church, can be seen or there is the chance to join an optional excursion to Blenheim Palace - birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, for a unique opportunity to experience the 'Palace at War' guided tour. A specialist guide will tell the story of how the palace prepared for the worst, survived the onslaught of 400 evacuated boys, yet still managed to keep the secrets of MI5.

INFO

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Scarborough, Whitby and York

Four days departing April 11 and June 20

PRICE FROM £209

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Chester, Portmeirion and Welsh Mountain Steam

Three days departing
April 25, June 20 and September 26

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Springtime at Eden and The Lost Gardens of Heligan

Four days departing March 28

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Classical Spectacular at the Royal Albert Hall

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Four days departing March 14

PRICE FROM £249

- Return coach travel and ferry crossings
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
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- Entrance to the Airborne Museum
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Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and add **key-it-in** promptly when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

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Or **Text.. REPLY 26** (leave a space) the six-digit box number (leave a space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY 26 123456 hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully forwarded messages cost £1.50 per message (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for yr safety and security.

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Women seeking men

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JILL 50, attractive, 5ft, blonde, own home, no ties, likes films, reading, travel, music, good social circle, seeking that someone special. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410105

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, 56, enjoys country walks, meals out, seeks professional gent with GSOH to enjoy the good things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408985

ANNA busy mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age of location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box 366019

ELAINE attractive 39yr old blonde single mum seeking respectful male/ad with similar interests for male/friendship, hopefully leading to love. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410117

DONNA 27yrs blue eyed blonde with cute dimpled smile, loves socialising but looking for that special someone with GSOH to cuddle up with, enjoy fun/good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409733

ADVENTUROUS attractive lady seeks no strings casual times with discreet gent. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box 409991

ABI creative free spirited lady enjoys drama, photography, music, WILTM well-spoken patient, independent non-judgmental man. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409723

MARGARET OHAC, professional, sincere, adventurous, loving, kind, solvent lady who enjoys most things WILTM caring male with similar refined tastes. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407925

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 408297

ATTRACTIVE 49yr old divorced lady, looking for honest, reliable man for LTR, 49-60. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409955

ABBA girl blonde lookalike, size 16, attractive, bubbly, OHAC, seeking solvent, refined, handsome guy with full head of hair, 5ft 9ins plus, professional and courteous. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409151

NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101

Hi I'm Jo, first timer, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089

SUSIE 32yr old woman who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877

BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat, out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285

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BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859

JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, wining, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408865

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489

TAYLOR attractive very busy curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253

KIRSTY blonde blue eyed size 12 nurse, enjoys cosy nights, driving, holidays, socialising. WILTM broadminded male for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409259

KATH blonde independent female, employed with OHAC looking for fun and laughter with likeminded nice easy going male, any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407955

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking career, enjoys dancing, nights out, WILTM loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419

SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109

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ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me, I'm very lonely. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505

Hi I'm Pam, cuddly, attractive, self-sufficient, employed, looking for similar young looking, sincere male for hopeful LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407933

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537

28YR old female, seeking male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408639

MIXED raced lady, 34, widely travelled, seeking gent, 30-40 for romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408429

68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853

SUE attractive lonely brunette who loves evns in/out, music, WILTM someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407021

CURVY Irish female 35yrs looking for fun, frolics, weekends away and lots of excitement with reliable male, discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407603

SLIM active lady, 60's, N/S, seeks honest, kind, 57-62 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407693

ANNABELLA board attractive 30 something nurse wanting healing hands for no strings fun. No TLC required. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407449

SUE 40's female who enjoys evenings in/out looking for someone to have some fun and hopefully get close to, go on, give me a ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407019

NICKY loving caring gorgeous fun young lady who loves swimming, dancing and lots more, seeking male for text chats and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407459

BLACK female, 45, seeking older gent, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787

PAM 71, feels young, lots to give, socialising, theatre, country walks, charity work, seeking male to share interests with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407851

LOVING caring young 67yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim size 12, brown hair, likes meals out, GSOH, smooth, seeks slim, smart male with GSOH, 58-62. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 364651

MANDY divorced independent 46yr old single mum, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and to be there for each other. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407469

NICKY 26 fun single female who has been on her own far too long desperately seeking her Prince Charming, must be tactile and possess the ability to fall in love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407485

MICHELLE lonely singleton, fit/slender, passionate, easy-going seeks male to cook for and generally spoil rotten in exchange for great companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407501

HEATHER larger than life, cuddly built lady, scrubs up pretty well, employed, OHAC, GSOH, looking for good times with willing male, fun times guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407307

TRACY 35yr old blonde petite single mum, WILTM tall male for nights out, text chats and hopefully ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407215

LYN slim size 10, 5ft 9ins, attractive with GSOH, OHAC, employed, WILTM genuine guy who is also looking to put some fun back into life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407195

DEBS 37yr old professional, outgoing, bubbly, seeking genuine man for good times in/out and just see where it leads. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407039

BLONDE blue eyed 72yr old widow, GSOH, young at heart, seeks honest, caring gent of similar age for holidays, weekends away and happy times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407113

WHERE have all the genuine men gone? Sue single female who enjoys nights in/out, music, seeks sincere male to enjoy good times and get close to. Pls ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407025

PAULA 38 single mum with OHAC, attractive blue eyes, size 14, seeking well built male with GSOH and honest/reliable disposition, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407029

MEDIUM built female, 66, widow, 5ft 5ins, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407003



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*EG send WINK 123456 to 80098
80098 costs £1.50 per SMS sent. To STOP text stop to 80098. Service provided by JMedia UK Ltd. SW4 7BX. Need Help? Call 0844 800 1188

Hi I am Linda a lonely petite mature lady looking for nice caring male up to 65yrs who also has lots of love to give for hopeful relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406715

ANITA petite 33yr old tanned, toned sexy size 10 female with very high drive and lots of energy looking for similar man for adult no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406835

CARING female, likes Indian rock music, concert, cinema, seeks North Staffs male, 40-55 for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406757

LINDA bored housewife wanting to spice things up a bit looking for clean well-mannered professional for discreet adult meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406705

GOOD looking professional female, 51, enjoys arts, wine/dining, sight seeing, country walks, seeks special male to enjoy great fun with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406765

DONNA 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406341

SINGLE cuddly female, 5ft 6ins, green eyes, seeks male, 40-50 for fun and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406015

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985

SHELLEY 48, 5ft 5ins, brunette, seeking discreet relationship with male 48-52 for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405795

CHRISTINA 38 very pretty petite trainee nurse looking for N/S male companionship to enjoy meals/drinks out, leading to more maybe. Age/looks and status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405243

BLACK female 32yrs, 38dd, very curvy, sensual and looking for discreet fun with no strings or complications, any age, looks or status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405269

MARIA petite curvy brunette, into keep fit, running, beauty, looking for nice genuine tall N/S guy with no ties for fun adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405099

SHAZ 33 easygoing voluptuous black female with lovely smile and personality to match, loves music, keeping fit and looking good. WILTM appreciative guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404619

WOMAN 55yrs old, N/S, size 14, likes animals, nature, reading, TV, quiet life, seeks man 45-55, N/S for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404447

WIDOW young hearted 70's, N/S, likes reading, concerts, gardening, meals out, WILTM younger gentleman with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404171

ELIZABETH 33, curvy attractive blonde, well-balanced, sociable, meals out, entertaining. WILTM well educated nice male 50-60's for nice times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403937

SENSUAL cuddly 32yr old professional looking for similar minded discreet male up to 40yrs for 1-2-1 fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404023

48YR old attractive female seeking long fun maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403947

BLONDE attractive educated lady 50, young minded, seeks professional tall male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391818

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807

TINA fun loving single mum who enjoys most things in life, seeking happy guy with GSOH for meals in, dates out, possible romance and adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403567

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127

ATTRACTIVE lady, GSOH, slim, dark hair, 50's, likes walks, films, art, meals out, seeks male with GSOH and similar interests for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399245

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384852

GAIL 52, blonde hair, 5ft 2ins, likes nights out, seeks N/S male, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402041

LIZ 42, black, divorced, seeking male, 44-54 for kind, sincere, honest, open relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400949

DEBBIE sexy size 14, fun, outgoing, discreet, looking for fun times only with male over 40yrs, call to find out more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398759

NICKY lonely 39yr old single mum looking for adult companionship and strictly no strings fun. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399189

RETIRE lady, seeks gent for friendship and outings, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392936

SARAH 23, attractive, brunette, slim, looking for male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392979

Men seeking women

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ATTRACTIVE tall, dark, professional gent, easy going, GSOH, likes sport, socialising, company, seeking similar lady with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410175

MALE 47, would like loving, adult relationship, age/status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410037

DAN 36, down to earth, attractive, enjoy pubs, meals out, football, boxing, cinema, shopping, seeking special female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410037

JIMMY 53 good looking, fit, genuine, honest, very loving and looking for the same in a woman. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397157

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JOHN 59, 5ft 8ins, OHAC, GSOH, seeks lady, 46-55, likes meals out and in. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403273

FRN loving male, 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, seeks mature female, 50-65 for meals out and daytime relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408185

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411

MATURE land owner, GSOH, youthful outlook, likes countryside, socialising, history, seeks lady who appreciates good food/conversation with view to relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408417

BROADMINDED 42yr old male, GSOH, caring, loving good personality seeks female for fun friendship, relationship and adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404623

MAURICE Shropshire farmer, 43, seeks farming lady of any age to share the good things in life with view to LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 374021

YOUNG looking 50's male, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408177

SINGLE male, youthful, serene, seeks similar down to earth non materialistic female to become everlasting soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407711

CHRIS divorced, 55, smoker, seeks female, 30-45 for lasting relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407715

GENUINE good looking male, 39, WILTM genuine, pretty female, 24-42 for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407753

SHY 60yr old male, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407847

32YR old slim, dark haired, adventurous, creative, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753

JEFF

What's On!

REVIEW

Priscilla Queen of the Desert: The Musical, Grand Theatre

TWO drag queens and a transsexual on a road trip across the Aussie outback might not sound a promising subject matter for a musical but Priscilla is a sensational feel-good show.

Packed full of disco classics and featuring the most flamboyant and bizarre frocks you will ever see, this version of a cult movie has been a hit Down Under and in the West End.

Star of the show Jason Donovan hasn't joined this leg of the tour but he has a capable replacement in former Hear'Say singer Noel Sullivan as Tick, the female impersonator whose secret reason for carting his drag act from Sydney to Alice Springs is that he has a son who wants to meet him.

The terrific trio are completed by Richard Grieve (Aussie TV credentials include the essential Neighbours and Home and Away) as elegant transsexual Bernadette, with waspish tongue and warm heart, and Graham Weaver as the impulsive flirt Adam who wants nothing more than to sing a Kylie medley in full showgirl costume on the top of Ayer's Rock. Of course, all their dreams come true but they have to face homophobic hostility.

There is some strong language and lots of innuendo but this is a good natured show which got the Grand audience out of their seats to boogie along. Priscilla continues until Saturday.

LEON BURAKOWSKI

Hercule Poirot returning to solve a mystery at the Grand

Prog rock legends are back

ONE of the great rock drummers, Carl Palmer, will be playing the progressive rock highlights from his time with 70s super-group Emerson Lake & Palmer at Birmingham Town Hall on February 20.

ELP are no more but Palmer will be joined by virtuoso players Paul Bilotowicz on guitar and Simon Fitzpatrick bass. Several rock legends are returning in early 2014. Very Eavy Very Umble outfit Uriah Heep, featuring guitarist Mick Box, are at Bilston's Robin 2 on February 8. Martin Turner's Wishbone Ash play the same venue on February 12. American prog rockers Dream Theater are at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on February 15. On March 10 Camel perform their classic Snow Goose album at Birmingham Town Hall.



Fanfare for a great rock drummer – Carl Palmer will be celebrating the music of ELP

BELGIAN detective Hercule Poirot may have tackled his last case on screen in the form of actor David Suchet but Agatha Christie's fastidious sleuth is back on stage at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre – in the form of former Jesus of Nazareth star Robert Powell.

Poirot is set to get "the little grey cells" working in Black Coffee, Dame Agatha's first play and the latest production from The Agatha Christie Company, whose previous productions at the Grand include Go Back For Murder in 2013, Murder On The Nile in 2012 and Verdict in 2011.

Robert Powell received multiple awards for his portrayal of Jesus in Franco Zeffirelli's Jesus of Nazareth and went on to star in numerous films including The 39 Steps. He will be joined by Liza Goddard, from Bergerac and the long-running Give Us A Clue, former Peak Practice doctor Gary Mavers and Ben Nealon from Soldier Soldier.

Black Coffee is a quintessential English country estate whodunnit with Poirot investigating the murder of an eccentric inventor.

It will be staged at the Grand from Monday to Saturday, after the final performances of Aussie musical Priscilla Queen of the Desert. David Essex rolls up his



Robert Powell as Poirot

sleeves to join The Dishwashers at Birmingham Rep from tomorrow to February 15. Musical revival Seven Brides For Seven Brothers is at Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Saturday.

NME tour heads for O2 Academy

THE 2014 NME award tour features a four band line-up, headlined by New York group Interpol, at Birmingham's O2 Academy on March 25.

Joining the influential US outfit will be three British bands. Temples are at the forefront of the psychedelic pop revival and the Kettering outfit have a new album out next month. Royal Blood are a powerhouse noise-rock duo from Brighton and Liverpool's Circa Waves are a thrilling young band in the tradition of the Arctic Monkeys.

Du Beke dances into the spotlight

STRICTLY Come Dancing's Anton Du Beke gets his chance to shine with special guests, West End star Summer Strallen and Burn The Floor's Faye Huddleston, during two shows in Birmingham.

The ballroom dancer will be joined by Strictly singer Lance Ellington and a big band at the Symphony Hall on February 8 and 9.

Sounds of soul

SOUL DJs Ian Gee, David Rimmer and Little Scotty are among the line-up taking Northern Soul fans back to the days of the Wigan Casino at Dudley Town Hall on Saturday from 8pm until late. R&B band Soul Survivor are at the same venue on February 8.

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What's On!

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Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Marvin Humes

**The Voice UK
BBC1, 7.10pm**

A clever spin on so many talent shows, the blind auditions have been a delight, as they always are, not least because of the banter between the judges. But Kylie admits this round is rather daunting, explaining: "They were really nerve-racking as to when you should press the button. So many things were going through my mind." Of course, now that Celebrity Big Brother has crowned its winner, Emma Willis can devote all her time to the Beeb's baby, and she's joined backstage as always by Marvin Humes either consoling the losers or rejoicing with the chosen few.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **4.30** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. **6.55** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **7.10** **The Voice UK.** The fourth round of the chair-spinning singing contest, with coaches Kylie Minogue, Tom Jones, Will.i.am and Ricky Wilson aiming to bolster their teams. **8.30** **The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins.** Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of strangers list as much as they know about given subjects. Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws, with Kate Garraway. **9.20** **Casualty.** Rita helps a rape victim gain the courage to press charges, while Zoe treats an eccentric veteran dancer with a confession to make. **10.10** BBC News; Weather. **10.30** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, which included Newcastle United v Sunderland and Stoke City v Manchester United; National Lottery Update. **11.55** **The Football League Show.** Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from today's fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two, including Queens Park Rangers v Burnley at Loftus Road. **1.15** Weatherview. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.35** Film: Enchanted April. (1935) **7.40** Film: The Maggie. (1954) **9.10** Life on Earth. (R) **10.05** Life on Earth. (R) **11.00** Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain. (R) **11.30** Great British Railway Journeys. (R) **12.00** The A to Z of TV Cooking. **12.45** The Good Cook. (R) **1.15** The Big Bread Experiment. (R) **2.15** Film: Anchors Aweigh. (1945) **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Coast. (R) **6.00** **Vultures: Beauty in the Beast - Natural World.** (R) **7.00** **Fiog It!** Kate Bliss and David Fletcher offer advice on antiques in Warrminster, Wiltshire, while Paul Martin investigates the UFO sightings reported in the town in the 1960s and 70s. **8.00** **Dad's Army.** Captain Mainwaring's men acquire a boat, planning to use it for coastal patrols, but they get lost in fog and believe they have crossed the Channel when they finally reach dry land. (R) **8.30** **QI XL.** Stephen Fry presents an extended version of the quiz, and poses some unusual questions about jelly, jam and juice to Jo Brand, Liza Tarbuck, Sue Perkins and Alan Davies. **9.15** **Film: Made in Dagenham.** (2010) The female employees of a 1960s British car firm lead a national strike, demanding the right to equal pay. Fact-based comedy drama, starring Sally Hawkins and Miranda Richardson. **11.00** **Live Davis Cup Tennis.** USA v Great Britain. **1.00** Film: Comfort and Joy. (1984) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dinner Date. (R) **10.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.30** ITV News; Weather. **11.45** The Crocodile Hunter Diaries. (R) **12.40** Film: Charade. (1963) **2.50** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.50** Film: Johnny English. (2003) **6.25** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.35** **ITV News;** Weather. **6.50** **Splash!** Perri Kiely, Michaela Strachan, Keith Duffy and Danielle Lloyd don their swimwear once more to perform two dives each in the first semi-final. Vernon Kay and Gabby Logan present. **8.20** **Take Me Out.** A Manchester football coach, a Surrey student, a carpet cleaner from Glasgow and a plumber from Bognor Regis try to impress a panel of single women. Paddy McGuinness presents. **9.35** **The Jonathan Ross Show.** Taken star Liam Neeson talks about his new action thriller Non-Stop and Peter Andre discusses the latest addition to his family. **10.35** **ITV News;** Weather. **10.50** **Film: Bloody Sunday.** (2002) Fact-based drama recalling the events when British soldiers opened fire on a parade in Londonderry in 1972, killing 13 unarmed civilians. With James Nesbitt. **12.55** Jackpot247. **3.00** Ladette to Lady: Australia. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** Trans World Sport. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** How I Met Your Mother. **11.30** How I Met Your Mother. **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.35** Undercover Boss USA. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **3.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **6.00** **Come Dine with Me.** Russell Stubbs hosts the final party in Greve and Nantwich, Cheshire. (R) **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **Speed with Guy Martin.** The racing fan builds a prototype toboggan and heads to the Pyrenees, where he attempts to break the record for the world's fastest gravity-powered sled. Last in the series. (R) **8.00** **Bigfoot Files.** Mark Evans travels to America's Pacific Northwest to meet people who claim to have come face to face with a sasquatch, and Bryan Sykes reveals the results of his DNA tests. (R) **9.00** **Hostages.** Ellen and Brian come up with an escape plan, while Duncan's wife Nina tells him she wants to stop her gruelling chemotherapy treatment. **10.00** **Film: Priest.** (2011) Premiere. Fantasy thriller, starring Paul Bettany. **11.45** **Film: 28 Weeks Later.** (2007) Horror sequel, starring Robert Carlyle. **1.30** **Film: Street Kings.** (2008) **3.15** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.15** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Film: Bewitched. (2005) **12.00** Film: Blue Streak. (1999) **1.45** Diagnosis Murder. (R) **2.45** Film: Columbo: Make Me a Perfect Murder. (1978) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. **4.45** Film: Columbo: A Friend in Deed. (1974) **6.40** **5 News Weekend.** **6.45** **NCIS.** McGee tries to help his sister, who believes she may have murdered someone - but is too traumatised and disoriented to remember exactly what happened. Drama, starring Sean Murray. (R) **7.35** **NCIS.** Two FBI agents try to seize control of the team's investigation into the discovery of a perfectly preserved body hidden in a chimney at a Marine base. (R) **8.30** **The NCIS Movie: War on Terror.** Feature-length episode. Gibbs and the team are called in to help identify US marines among the wreckage of a military aircraft transporting their bodies back home. **10.10** **Film: The Contract.** (2006) A retired cop stumbles across a fugitive in the woods and tries to return him to custody, but the criminal's henchmen intervene. Thriller, starring John Cusack and Morgan Freeman. Edited to remove product placement. **12.10** SuperCasino. **3.05** Botched Up Bodies. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Top Gear. Richard Hammond drives two Lamborghinis in Italy. **8.00** Live Davis Cup Tennis. USA v Great Britain. **11.00** Family Guy **BBC Four** **7.00** Wild China **8.00** Pain, Pus & Poison: The Search for Modern Medicines **9.00** The Bridge **11.00** The Joy of Abba **ITV2** **2.35** Film: Peter Pan (2003) **4.45** You've Been Framed! **5.45** You've Been Framed! Kids Special **6.50** Film: Miss Congeniality (2000) **9.00** Film: Quantum of Solace (2008) **11.10** The Maguluf Weekender **ITV3** **2.25** Film: Summer Holiday (1963) **4.40** Inspector Morse **7.00** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Vera **11.00** A Touch of Frost **Drama** **3.10** Cadfael **4.40** One Foot in the Grave **6.00** All Creatures Great and Small **7.00** Young James Herriot **8.20** Last of the Summer Wine **9.00** Waking the Dead **11.30** Sharpe **F4** **4.00** The Jump **5.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **6.00** How I Met Your Mother **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** The Tomorrow People **9.00** Film: John Tucker Must Die (2006) **10.50** Rude Tube: Heroes and Villains **11.50** The Midnight Beast **Film4** **3.10** Nacho Libre (2006) **4.55** The Thirty-Nine Steps (1959) **6.45** A Good Year (2006) **9.00** Shooter (2007) Action thriller, starring Mark Wahlberg. **11.25** The Fourth Kind (2009)

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY

Mickey Blue Eyes, ITV, 10.35pm

A strait-laced Englishman falls for a New York mobster's daughter, who wants to escape her family's criminal connections. However, try as he may, he realises there is virtually no way to avoid being drawn into its members' illegal activities. Romantic comedy, starring Hugh Grant and Jeanne Tripplehorn. (1999)

There's Something About Mary, Channel 4, 11.35pm

A lovelorn man hires a sleazy private eye to track down his high-school sweetheart in the hope of rekindling their brief relationship. By unfortunate coincidence, the detective also falls for her, and then it emerges there are even more men out there competing for her affections. Comedy from the Farrelly brothers, starring Cameron Diaz, Ben Stiller and Lee Evans. (1998)

TUESDAY

Away from Her, BBC1, 11.20pm

An elderly woman with Alzheimer's disease is adamant she will move into a care home to spare her husband of 50 years the burden of looking after her. Sadly, this leaves him in the heartbreaking position of having to watch helplessly as his beloved wife slips away from him. Drama, based on a short story by Alice Munro, starring Gordon Pinsent, Julie Christie, Olympia Dukakis and Alberta Watson. (2006)



The Matador, Wednesday, BBC1, 11.35pm

WEDNESDAY

The Matador, BBC1, 11.35pm

A lonely, burnt-out assassin strikes up an unlikely friendship with a down-on-his-luck businessman he meets in a Mexican bar. However, as the hitman's personal crises interfere with his work, he is forced to turn to his new friend to help him carry out a killing. Black comedy, starring Pierce Brosnan. (2005)

THURSDAY

McBride: The Doctor Is Out, Really Out, Channel 5, 3.15pm

The crusading lawyer takes on a custody case, only for his client to later confess to having murdered the psychiatrist who testified against him. However, when McBride shows up at the doctor's house, the body is nowhere to be found. Mystery directed by and starring John Larroquette, with Marta DuBois. (2005)

FRIDAY

Paschendale, BBC2, 11.05pm

A Canadian soldier is injured in battle during the First World War, and falls for a nurse in the hospital. Declared unfit for duty due to ill health, he is reassigned to a recruitment station – but he tricks his way back to the front line to protect the brother of the woman he loves. Drama, directed by and starring Paul Gross. (2008)

Pick of the Week

Family matters to Banks in a troublesome case

Stephen Tompkinson would be wasted behind a desk in a boring nine to five office job.

As an actor, he's proved he's about as versatile as they come. We've seen him on-screen under the guise of a reporter, a priest, a construction worker, a vet and of course, dogged cop DCI Alan Banks, who's back on our screens tonight.

As we launch into another series of this fantastic drama, there's bound to be some tense moments as DS Annie Cabbot (Andrea Lowe) returns from maternity leave.

Banks leads the investigations after a man and woman claiming to be social workers visit a mother and tell her they need to take her son away. However when they don't return the boy, it soon transpires that the pair aren't known by the authorities. Banks pushes DI Morton (Caroline Catz) to get closer to the mother to find out why she might be targeted, but the whole thing's a little close to home for the detective in the face of the problems with her son. Meanwhile,

Annie believes she might have found a credible suspect for the lad's abduction at his school.

With this highly anticipated third series, it sounds like we'll be treated to all the usual gritty murder mysteries from the pen of creator Peter Robinson, as well as a bit of a delve in to Banks' private life, with the introduction of his university dropout daughter, Tracey.

Last series, we learned a little more about Banks' immediate family, as Polly Hemmingsway and Keith Barron were cast as his parents. At the time, Stephen expressed his delight at exploring the Banks character even further, saying: "With the pilot and the first series, we really wanted to establish Banks for the policeman that he is – dogged and determined – and now we've been fortunate enough to add a bit more colour to his background in a personal way."

That they did, and it went down a storm – the second series attracted 4.7million viewers in its first week. Stephen Tompkinson can rest

assured that whatever role he's playing, he's a firm favourite among ITV's loyal viewers.

Among other popular shows including Drop the Dead Donkey, Brassed Off played its part in making Stephen a household name, but it also introduced him to TV and silver-screen legend and good friend, Pete Postlethwaite.

Stephen explains: "I always think of Pete, and it's almost like he's an even bigger influence now. I think about him a lot, especially when working."

"He had such control over his emotions and expressions, so it was always like watching a master class with Pete. He obsessed about the script, he knew he was nowhere without a writer and that's where it all starts from, those are the foundations. I always try and think what would Pete do at this moment?"

"I'm not as good as him, I never will be but I do keep trying and he still remains an inspiration."



Stephen Tompkinson stars in DCI Banks, Monday, ITV, 9pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY

Britain's Great War BBC1, 9pm

Commentary: July, we probably won't be able to budge for documentaries commemorating the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War, and all thoughts will be with those who lost their lives fighting for our country. But the Beeb's getting its foot in that door early and Jeremy Paxman kicked off this stunning four-part series last week by focusing on the early stages of the conflict. This week, the presenter follows up by describing the crisis facing the country as it became obvious that it was fatally unprepared to fight a modern industrial war. The whole population is enlisted – while women fill the factories to make bombs, men are forced onto the frontline, and conscientious objectors are threatened with the firing squad.

TUESDAY

Celebrity Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? ITV, 8pm

"Is that your final answer?" It's a question that's going to sound poignant this week as Chris Tarrant presents the last-ever episode of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? After nearly 16 years, this one-time ratings topper is being retired, but at least it's going out in style as celebrity contestants play for their chosen charities. This week's pairing are actor James Nesbitt and hidden camera-man Dom Joly, Olympic cyclist Chris Hoy and comedian Kevin Bridges, and Hairy Biker Dave Myers and Countdown's Rachel Riley – if the last two in particular sound like an odd pairing, they did both compete against each other on Strictly Come Dancing.

She's 78, He's 39: Age Gap Love Channel 5, 9pm

Caroline Flack came in for a lot of, well, flack when she embarked upon a relationship with a decidedly youthful Harry Styles, but was that 15-year age gap really that shocking in the grand scheme of things? Not if the people in this documentary are anything to go by. They include Marilyn, who met her husband William when she was 45 and he was just 16. The pair's relationship was under pressure from the start, with friends and neighbours pouring scorn – but they've had the last laugh, as they're still going strong now. Other couples are Edna (79) and Simon (39), who met over their mutual love of organ music, Mike (74) and Lindsey (33) who have just had a baby, and 58-year-old Gary, who enjoys clubbing with wife Kate, who's half his age.

WEDNESDAY

Midsomer Murders ITV, 8pm

June Whitfield, Bernard Cribbins, Robert Bathurst and Laila Rouass will be flying high when they guest star in the latest episode of the ever-popular crime drama. They feature in a story involving aeroplanes and military heroes. Barnaby and Nelson are called in to investigate the death of Finchmere Airfield owner Bernard King, and it was no accident – he was hit over the head before being thrown out of a plane flying at

400ft. The policemen have two groups of suspects – one set are from an anti-aircraft campaign, while the others are linked to a tragic Second World War mission. But can they work out who is responsible?

Inside No 9

BBC2, 10pm

Over the next six weeks, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith present a series of darkly comic tales designed to intrigue and disturb, all set behind the door of a different 'No 9'. Among them is a blood-soaked actor's dressing room in the

West End, and the one-bedroom flat of an apparently happy primary school teacher, but first up is a grand house where an innocent game of Sardines leads to some chilling revelations. Guests arrive at the country pile to celebrate Rebecca and Jeremy's engagement party, but one of the bedrooms contains secrets among some old baggage... Katherine Parkinson and Julian Rhind-Tutt are among the impressive cast of familiar faces.

THURSDAY

Inspector George Gently BBC1, 8.30pm

The last series of the crime

drama ended on a particularly shocking note with George Gently (Martin Shaw) and his partner in crime-solving Bacchus (Lee Ingleby) being caught up in a shooting at Durham Cathedral. Now this new run picks up six months later (meaning we've now reached 1969), and finds that while Gently is on his way back to full fitness, Bacchus is suffering from a crisis of confidence as well as a gunshot wound to the stomach. The investigation duo are handed this week doesn't initially look likely to reignite his enthusiasm for the job either, as they look into the death of Simon Thomas, who died in custody after being arrested during a protest.

FRIDAY

Live Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony BBC2, 3.30pm

The build-up to the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, hasn't exactly been awe-inspiring. Instead, there's been controversy due to the country's new laws banning what the government describes as 'gay propaganda'. Hopefully the spectacle on display at this, the 22nd time the event has taken place, will help get rid of the sour taste in some people's mouths. We've certainly been promised an amazing display featuring 2,000 performers who will showcase Russia's culture and achievements, and will conclude with the most important moment of all – the lighting of the Olympic flame, which will burn throughout the games. It certainly could do with a rest – it's spent months travelling around, even making a journey into space at one point. Hazel Irvine narrates the proceedings.

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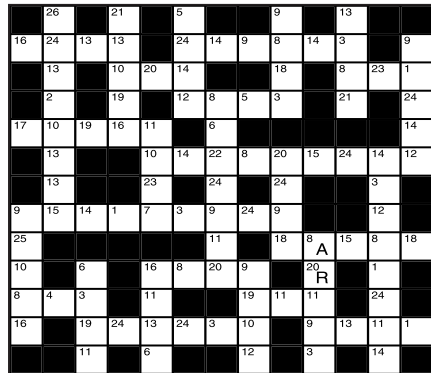
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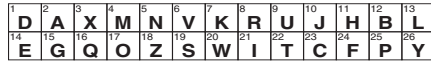
No.258

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

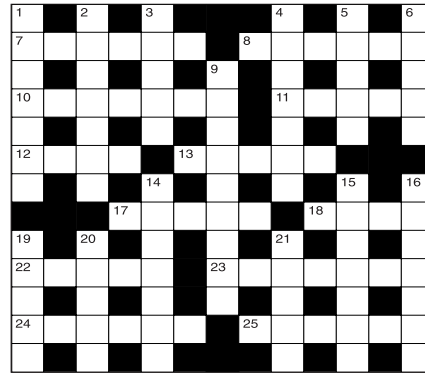
Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. Desert dweller with the French kind of farming (6)
8. A long time after the point of second childhood (6)
10. Mountain chain at the end of the street is unusual (7)
11. In this way the cover is substantial (5)
12. The way one walks to make an entrance, we hear (4)
13. Steer clear of a vacuum (5)
17. Petulant enough to change sides (5)
18. What the wound leaves behind causes endless alarm (4)
22. Could be cited as an authoritative statement (5)
23. Luck brings a great deal of money (7)
24. Rescues about fifty bondmen (6)
25. Southern region near a Greek state (6)

Down

1. An extract taken from 'The Ocean Voyage' (7)
2. Fastener for locks (4-3)
3. Often seen in the heavens, but not quite a heavenly body (5)
4. The pirate has an ill-mannered appearance, we hear (7)
5. Attack southern state fighting on the same side (5)
6. Finds one's way to the western extremities (5)
9. Doesn't continue when the fall has taken place? (6,3)
14. The sort of hood for a monk (7)
15. Get a group of singers, by the sound of it (7)
16. Magazine containing material likely to cause a report (7)
19. Most satisfactory surroundings for a wild animal (5)
20. Cleric taking part in civic arrangements (5)
21. Cuts what farmers produce (5)



Quick Clues:

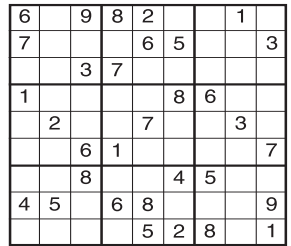
Across

7. Journey (6)
8. Trade by exchange (6)
10. Sailor (7)
11. Artless (5)
12. Observe (4)
13. Bury (5)
17. Lukewarm (5)
18. Sharpen (4)
22. Name (5)
23. Try (7)
24. Mourn (6)
25. Modern (6)

Down

1. Endurance (7)
2. Relate (7)
3. Intended (5)
4. Artist (7)
5. Garret (5)
6. Command (5)
9. Chief (9)
14. Mislead (7)
15. Cry feebly (7)
16. Law (7)
19. Platform (5)
20. Peel (5)
21. Scatter (5)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	1	6	2	9	5	7	3	8
9	5	2	7	3	8	1	6	4
6	7	3	6	1	4	9	2	5
7	8	4	3	5	9	2	1	6
2	3	5	4	6	1	8	7	9
6	9	1	8	7	2	5	4	3
5	2	7	9	4	6	3	8	1
3	4	9	1	8	7	6	5	2
1	6	8	5	2	3	4	9	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Muses; 4 Desired; 8 Starter; 9 Grass; 10 Need; 11 Underman; 13 Ties; 14 Stud; 16 Specious; 17 Fare; 20 Agree; 21 Tacile; 22 Demeter; 23 Sheet. Down: 1 Misunderstand; 2 State; 3 Site; 4 Daring; 5 Segments; 6 Reamed; 7 Disengagement; 12 Penitent; 13 Theorem; 15 Cutter; 18 Amine; 19 Acts. QUICK - Across: 1 Appal; 4 Pretend; 8 Look-out; 9 Plaid; 10 Glee; 11 Unwieldy; 13 Bred; 14 Mild; 16 Hygienic; 17 Flag; 20 Agile; 21 Overdue; 22 Sweeten; 23 Dress. Down: 1 At loggerheads; 2 Prove; 3 Lout; 4 Potent; 5 Explicit; 6 Enabled; 7 Daddy-long-legs; 12 Vehement; 13 Beguile; 15 Disown; 18 Ledge; 19 Tend.



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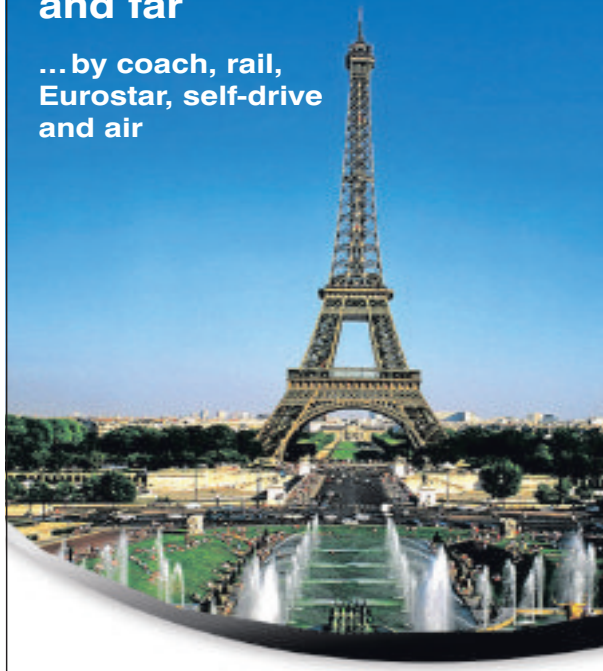
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0121 585 6667**Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management**

WEOLLEY CASTLE, Barnes Hill £975 pcm • Fees
A huge detached house close to Newman University. This property features 2 large reception rooms, modern kitchen, utility area the back of the garage, 4 big double bedrooms, shower room, separate toilet, huge long garden with a summer house, driveway for 2/3 cars. Benefits also include double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: E



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Newland Gardens £650 pcm • Fees
Spacious well situated link-detached bungalow in cul de sac position. Large lounge, fitted kitchen opening into superbly proportioned full width conservatory overlooking private rear garden. 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, garage & driveway, gas central heating/double glazed. Unfurnished or furnished to suit. EPC: D



OLDBURY, Pel Crescent £650 pcm • Fees
A wonderfully presented modern and terrace property featuring: spacious lounge, modern fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms; master bedroom with ensuite. Downstairs W.C. gas central heating, double glazed with driveway parking for 2 cars. Available now. EPC: C



ROWLEY REGIS, Alwin Road £650 pcm • Fees
This detached house in a cul-de-sac location. Located close to local shops and transport links. Featuring gas central heating, living room, dining area, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking, unfurnished. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Castle Close £625 pcm • Fees
A newly modernised unfurnished semi detached house in a sought after location briefly featuring 3 bedrooms, brand new fitted dining kitchen, brand new bathroom with shower. Benefits also include garage and driveway parking, rear garden. Cul-de-sac location. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Holt Road £625 pcm • Fees
An immaculately presented mid terrace property in a convenient location for shops, buses and motorway links. The property features a homely lounge, dining room, luxury refitted shower room, 2 double bedrooms, and 2 single loft rooms, gas central heating, double glazing, small rear court yard garden, on road parking. EPC: D



NEW
HALESOWEN, Middlefield Gardens £595 pcm • Fees
First floor apartment in Hurst Green. Set within well maintained gardens, this apartment features a large lounge, 2 double and 1 single bedroom, fitted kitchen with appliances, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, parking area and communal gardens. Available now. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Barrs Road £595 pcm • Fees
Beautiful living room. An end terraced unfurnished property, recently refurbished to a high standard and situated in a popular residential area which is ideal for Timbertree Primary School. Featuring 3 bedrooms, fitted kitchen with white goods, 2 reception rooms, off road parking with rear garden. EPC: D



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Mill Road £575 pcm • Fees
A beautifully refurbished 3 bedroom semi-detached house. This lovely home is situated on the Timbertree Estate and ideal for local schools and bus links. The house features 3 large bedrooms, brand new kitchen/dining room, new bathroom with shower, large lounge, good size garden, on road parking. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Peckingham Street £525 pcm • Fees
Wonderfully refurbished with original features maintained. 2 apartments immediately available with fantastic convenience centre of town. Ring us now to view these lovely light, airy flats, one with 2 large bay windows. Each has modern kitchen with new appliances and useful utility room. With 2 double bedrooms and 2 bathrooms these are must see exceptional apartments. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Olive Lane £550 pcm • Fees
An unfurnished 2 bed semi detached home, close to Blackheath Town Centre. Benefiting from double glazing and central heating and comprising of 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen with appliances, utility room, downstairs family bathroom, 2 double bedrooms, converted attic room, garage and long mature garden. EPC: F



HALESOWEN, Hope Street £495 pcm • Fees
A fully refurbished ground floor apartment having spacious lounge, refitted kitchen with integrated electric oven and hob, 2 double bedrooms, refitted bathroom and newly fitted carpets. The apartment has a garage and gardens to front and rear, full double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: D



TIPTON, Ferguson Drive £495 pcm • Fees
A lovely modern ground floor apartment, briefly comprising of: 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, electric storage heating, double glazing, 2 allocated parking spaces, communal gardens, internal viewing recommended. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Court Street £495 pcm • Fees
A 2 bedroom traditional terraced property in the centre of Old Hill which features 2 double bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, 1 dining/study room, modern fitted kitchen and downstairs bathroom with shower and separate toilet. Gas central heating. Walking distance to rail/bus links. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Banners Street £495 pcm • Fees
A mid terrace property which has been refurbished comprising of 2 double bedrooms, brand new fitted kitchen, 2 reception rooms, white bathroom suite with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, large tiered garden with decking area, on road parking. EPC: E



NEW
HALESOWEN, Juniper Rise £450 pcm • Fees
An unfurnished ground floor apartment in the centre of Colley Gate. Ideal for buses and shops. Featuring 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, modern bathroom with shower, modern fitted kitchen. Benefits include parking space. Cul-de-sac location. Offers superb value for money. EPC: TBC



NEW
HALESOWEN, Brett Young Close £450 pcm • Fees
Situated within a few minutes walk of Halesowen Town Centre and local bus station for buses into Birmingham City Centre. This well presented 1st floor apartment, comprising of 1 double bedroom, fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, house bathroom with shower, cosy lounge, double glazing, gas central heating and 1 allocated parking space. EPC: B



NEW
HALESOWEN, Masefield Rise £450 pcm • Fees
An unfurnished ground floor flat, in a well sought after location. A short walk from Halesowen and on a major bus route, this apartment features 1 double bedroom, fitted kitchen, lounge, bathroom with shower, double glazing, electric heating, garage en-block, rear garden. EPC: D



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Luanne Close £425 pcm • Fees
This lovely unfurnished ground floor apartment, with views over the canal and on a popular development. Featuring 1 double bedroom, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with small fridge and washing machine, gas central heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking, communal garden. EPC: C



LYE, High Street £425 pcm • Fees
Fully refurbished in the centre of Lye. This large and spacious 1st floor apartment has a lovely lounge with a feature bay window, 2 good size bedrooms, new bathroom suite but no shower, modern and contemporary kitchen with oven and hob, electric heating, double glazing, on road parking. EPC: F



ROWLEY REGIS, Winchester Close £395 pcm • Fees
An unfurnished 1st floor apartment, close to the M5 J2, buses and local shops. This apartment features 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, lounge, double glazing, bathroom with shower, parking space and parking area for visitors, communal gardens. EPC: D

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Stylish Norton semi

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It has a porch, reception hall, downstairs WC, an extended lounge, dining room, L-shaped refitted and extended kitchen, three good bedrooms, a refitted shower room, side garage, low maintenance rear gardens, a lawned

fore garden and driveway parking for two cars and a garage.

The reception hall has parquet flooring and the lounge has a flame-effect gas fire in feature fireplace, laminate flooring, and a French door to the pleasant gardens.

The dining room has an electric fire in feature surround and a laminate floor. The kitchen has a built-in oven and grill with matching four ring gas hob, a ceramic tiled floor and fitted breakfast bar area.

Bedroom one has a range of recently upgraded fitted wardrobes while bedroom two has mirror fronted wardrobes.

The shower room has a feature shaped glass shower cubicle.

The rear garden includes a feature Indian Sandstone patio with this space having a sunny aspect.

For further information contact Jon Stanier on 01384 77877 or visit www.jonstanier.co.uk



Barn conversion found in grounds of listed mansion

IVY House at Rudge Court, Rudge Road, near Wolverhampton, is a stylish barn conversion with charming accommodation of much flair in a rural setting.

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stand in the elegant grounds of Rudge Hall.

It has an entrance hall, cloakroom, a reception with ample space for lounge and dining areas and French doors to the garden and a solid fuel burning stove.

The refurbished dining kitchen has a four ring electric hob and double electric oven, ladder fridge and dishwasher, laundry, main bedroom suite with wardrobes and further furniture, beamed ceiling and en suite shower

room, three further bedrooms where beamed ceilings and wardrobes feature, a bathroom.

Lake

There is a rear garden with terrace and rockery and ornamental lake, a double garage and a part-walled further area of garden.

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BIRMINGHAM  Dunnigan Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Detached bungalow * Two reception rooms * Two bedrooms * Side garage * Private enclosed garden * No upward chain EPC = D Offers in the region of £225,000	OLDBURY  Broadway Croft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Extended Semi Detached * Through Lounge & Dining Room * Conservatory * Kitchen, Utility and WC * Well appointed bathroom & En-suite * Side Garage EPC=ttbc £199,950	ROWLEY REGIS  Duke Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Semi detached house * Two living rooms * Two good sized bedrooms * Breakfast kitchen * Bathroom * Rear garden EPC = tbc Offers in the region of £124,950	SMETHWICK  Windmill Lane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Terrace House * Two reception rooms * Three bedrooms * Small garden EPC = C Offers in the region of £84,950	CRADLEY HEATH  10A Upper High Street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Redecorated 1st floor flat * Neutral decoration/modern finish * One bedroom * Open plan kitchen/living room * Bathroom with shower over bath * DGV & Night storage heating * Available Now! * EPC=C Monthly rent of £360+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	HALESOWEN  112 Apperley Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * First floor flat having double bedroom * Fitted kitchen with some appliances * Bathroom with shower over bath * GCH & DG windows * EPC=D * Great location on popular estate * FANTASTIC VALUE FOR MONEY * Available from 18th February Monthly rent of £395+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	CRADLEY HEATH  Bluebell Court 4 Victoria Gardens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ground floor flat (Double bedroom) * GREAT VALUE FOR MONEY** * Good location for transport links * Large lounge * Kitchen with oven, hob & hood * Night storage heating & DGV * Allocated car space * EPC = D Monthly rent of £395+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.
ROWLEY REGIS  Royal Oak Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Semi detached house * Two bedrooms * Two reception rooms * Off road parking * No upward chain EPC = E Offers in the region of £107,500	SMETHWICK  Beakes Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Terraced House * Through room forming dining area and lounge * Kitchen * Downstairs bathroom * Three bedrooms * Pleasant rear garden EPC = E Offers in the region of £119,950	STOURBRIDGE Hagley  The Brake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mid Terraced House * Three Bedrooms * Downstairs wc * Pleasant Rear Garden * Garage * EPC = D Offers in the region of £169,950	CRADLEY HEATH  Unit 6 Comgreaves 76 Graingers Lane <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Industrial unit having gross internal floor area of 82.32 sq.m. (885 sq.ft.) * Kitchen, toilet and mezzanine office. * Ideal for food preparation. * Off-road parking. * EPC = tbc Annual rent of £4,500	CRADLEY HEATH  37 Spinners End Drive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Spacious 2nd floor flat * Double bedroom with fitted wardrobe * Large living room * Kitchen with oven and fridge * DG windows & NS heating * Allocated parking space * Convenient location * EPC = D * Available February 2014 Monthly rent of £395+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	HALESOWEN  324 Hagley Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mid-terraced house * FANTASTIC LOCATION! * Two double bedrooms * Two reception rooms * Kitchen with cooker * GCH & DG to most windows * Available February 2014! * EPC=D Monthly rent of £525+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.	OLDBURY  32 Elm Croft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 3 bedroom semi-detached house * Quality neutral & stylish finish * Quiet/popular location in tree lined road * Two reception rooms * Fitted kitchen with oven, hob and hood * UPVC double glazing & gas central heating * Available Now! * EPC=D Monthly rent of £650+ application fee £135 (inc VAT) 1st tenant and £100 (inc VAT) each additional tenant. Deposit required 6 weeks rent.

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CROWN CLOSE, ROWLEY REGIS  NEW SPACIOUS home in CUL-DE-SAC location. 15ft lounge to front & REFITTED 15ft kitchen diner to rear - BIG ROOMS!! 3 GENEROUS size bedrooms, bathroom & WC on 1st floor. UPVC DG & gas central heating fitted. Gardens to front & rear. EPC rating: C Ref: D1379 £106,950 Ref: D1379	MALLARD DRIVE, OLDBURY  NEW MODERN end terraced home in pleasant CUL-DE-SAC position. 16ft lounge diner & 12ft kitchen. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & bathroom. ALLOCATED PARKING to side. Lawn gardens to front & rear. Gas central heating & double glazing. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC rating: C Ref: D1378 £104,950 Ref: D1378	ARTHUR HARRIS CL, SMETHWICK  NEW MODERN end terraced home in CUL-DE-SAC location. 14ft lounge diner to rear & kitchen to front. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & bathroom. Lawn rear garden with access. Parking to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. Gas central heating & double glazing fitted. EPC rating: C Ref: D1383 £104,950 Ref: D1383	EDEN GARDENS, ROWLEY REGIS  NEW SPACIOUS ground floor apartment with PARKING to rear. NO UPWARD CHAIN Occupying a cul-de-sac position in MODERN block close to shops and amenities. 22ft Open plan LIVING AREA with gas/central heating and kitchen. Master bedroom with fitted wardrobes, second bedroom & bathroom. Modern electric heating, UPVC DBG & ALARM. SECURE INTERCOM ENTRY SYSTEM. EPC Rating: C Ref: D1351 £94,950 Ref: D1351	SUNNYBANK ROAD, OLDBURY  NEW LARGE 1st floor maisonette with NO UPWARD CHAIN in a CUL-DE-SAC location. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms & REFITTED shower room. 14ft lounge diner & 11ft kitchen. Communal gardens & parking. NO SERVICE CHARGES. UPVC DG & night storage heating. Only 49 years left on lease. EPC rating: F Ref: D1375 £74,950 Ref: D1375	KINGSWAY, OLDBURY  NEW MODERN ground floor apartment with allocated PARKING & secure intercom entry system. Reception hall with ample storage. 20ft 4 (max) open plan kitchen & lounge area. DOUBLE bedroom - bathroom with white suite. UPVC DG & electric heating. Ideal opportunity for first time buyer or investor. Close to Quinton/Halesowen borders. Well positioned for local shops, amenities and public transport. EPC rating: D Ref: D1385 £74,950 Ref: D1385

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EPC D

£300,000

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EPC C

£200,000

A four bedroom modern detached house comprising ground floor lounge, separate dining room, kitchen/diner, utility and WC. Halesowen

Witley Avenue, Halesowen



EPC D

£170,000

This is a modern detached house situated in an established residential area. Comprises lounge/diner, three bedrooms and bathroom. Halesowen

Hartfields Way, Rowley Regis



EPC C

Offers Over £140,000

Set in an established residential area comprising lounge/diner, kitchen, WC, four bedrooms and garage. Halesowen.

Clent View Road, Halesowen



Awaiting EPC

£130,000

This three bedroom semi detached house has recently undergone refurbishment. Halesowen.

Public Notice



EPC E

£120,000

43 Best Street, Old Hill, Cradley Heath, B64 5PA. We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £118,000. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

Central Avenue, Rowley Regis



EPC D

£85,000

This terraced property is situated in an established residential area. Comprises three bedrooms, family bathroom, drive, front and rear gardens. Halesowen.

Clement Road, Halesowen



EPC D

£85,000

Extended traditional three bedroom terraced house for sale. The property benefits from two reception rooms. Halesowen.

Brookfield Way, Tipton



EPC D

Offers Over £110,000

Mid terraced three bedroom property comprising lounge/diner, kitchen, family bathroom, front and rear gardens and parking to the side.

The Broadway, Dudley



EPC G

Offers Over £110,000

A three bedroom semi detached property briefly comprising entrance porch, entrance hall, two reception rooms, kitchen and bathroom.

Newick Street, Dudley



NEW

Awaiting EPC

Offers Over £110,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden, driveway and garage.

Cromwell Drive, Dudley



EPC D

Offers Over £105,000

Semi detached three bedroom property comprising entrance hall, lounge, dining room, extended kitchen, bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

Pear Tree Avenue, Tipton



EPC D

Offers Over £90,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, kitchen/diner, upstairs bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

Wood Road, Dudley



EPC D

Offers Over £90,000

Terraced three bedroom property briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen/diner, family bathroom and rear garden.

North Oval, Dudley



Awaiting EPC

Offers Over £90,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising downstairs WC, kitchen, dining room, lounge, family bathroom, rear garden and driveway.

Metropolitan Lofts, Dudley



EPC D

Offers Over £90,000

A penthouse two bedroom apartment briefly comprising lounge/kitchen and allocated undercover parking.

Motoring

Compiled by Motoring
Editor Sharon Walters

Nissan Qashqai leading the way

DEMAND for Nissan's award-winning Qashqai, the best-selling Crossover in Europe, helped lift output at the company's Sunderland plant above 500,000 units for the second year in succession.

Nissan's North East Plant, the largest car-assembly facility in the UK, has produced more than one million vehicles in the past two years amid continued investment and new model launches from the site.

Kevin Fitzpatrick, Nissan's vice-president for Manufacturing in the UK, said: "Building over a million cars in two years is a further sign of Nissan's growing brand presence in one of the most competitive markets in Europe."

"Exceeding output of 500,000 units for a second year is an even greater achievement given we combined this high volume whilst also starting production of the all-electric Nissan LEAF at the plant, along with the launch of the new Note, and replacing the most popular car we have ever made with the new generation Qashqai."

In 2013, more than 286,000 of the cars built in Sunderland last year were Nissan Qashqais, now in its eighth year of production. Total Qashqai production in the UK stands at 1,752,232 since 2006.

Production of the new generation Qashqai, which has been named Car of the Year by What Car?, will be marked with a launch event at Sunderland on January 22. "Our workforce continues to set the benchmark for productivity and quality, and I would like to thank and congratulate them

all on reaching this latest milestone," said Fitzpatrick.

The annual production figures of 501,756 follow a year in which Prime Minister David Cameron visited the plant to mark the launch of the Nissan LEAF, and work began on a plant extension to enable production of the Infiniti Q30 from 2015.

Monthly production broke the 50,000 barrier in October for the first time in Nissan's 27-year history of manufacturing in the UK, with eight different model variants built across the calendar year. The year ended with the unveiling of the new generation Qashqai, the embodiment of Nissan's innovation and excitement and the key driver in the company's goal of becoming the top-selling Asian brand in Europe.

Improvement

The new Qashqai, which goes on sale this month, will retain 50 per cent of its value after three years/30,000 miles – a 10 per cent improvement on its predecessor – according to latest data from residual value (RV) setters CAP.

The new £20,840 Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta now has an RV of 50 per cent or £10,400 after three years, meaning it is set to retain £2,375 more over its first three years of life compared to its outgoing equivalent.

Not only does this position Qashqai as the C segment diesel Crossover king but also places it ahead of some key hatch rivals such as the Volkswagen Golf. The 1.5 dCi also returns combined fuel consumption of 74.3mpg while emitting just 99g/km CO₂, further reinforcing the business case for fleet drivers. Meanwhile, the new Qashqai 1.2



DIG-T Acenta petrol – priced from just £19,145 – also enjoys a 10 per cent RV increase on the outgoing model, giving a real world RV after three years of £9,575, a £2,800 increase on the outgoing 1.6 Qashqai Acenta.

Helping to contribute to these strong value forecasts is an abundance of leading technology and safety items. Even entry-level Visia models get Bluetooth, cruise control and hill start assist, while top-of-the-range Tekna models boast Safety Shield with Traffic Signal Recognition and High Beam Assist.



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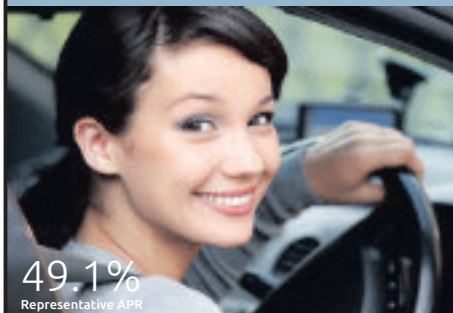
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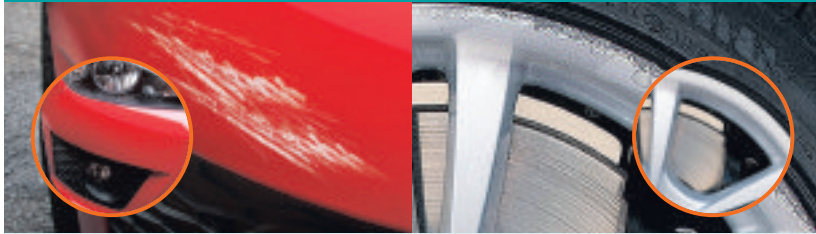
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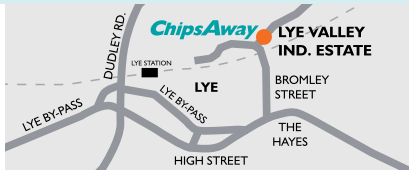
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Motoring

New Outback has that little bit extra

SUBARU'S Outback isn't an SUV, but offers most of what that class of vehicle provides in a package that's a little more rugged than your average jacked-up large 4x4 estate.

After all, its permanent Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive system will keep you going long after other off road estates have waved the white flag.

This improved, more efficient version of the fourth generation design is based solely around a 2.0-litre diesel powerplant which you can now choose to match with slick Lineartronic automatic transmission. It's also well equipped and smarter inside and out. Overall, a rare choice – but for the right kind of buyer, potentially a very good one.

Original

The Subaru Outback, with a history going all the way back to 1996, was the original off-road-orientated family estate, with an image that, at the turn of the century, placed it comfortably alongside big Volvos and Land Rovers as a preferred choice for the tweed-jacketed country set. In more recent times, it's been a rarer sight on our roads – something Subaru's importers would like to change, with the introduction of this much improved fourth generation version.

Paul Hogan of Crocodile Dundee fame was the face that originally launched this car back in the Nineties and sure enough, it's easy to imagine his grizzled face behind the wheel of one of these pounding across the Australian Outback. Or at least amongst some of its bumpy but passable trails.

A 50mm increase on ground clearance over the standard Legacy Tourer



estate on which this model is based means 200mm of fresh air beneath the bodywork.

In any case, cars like this one aren't bought to tackle the Rubicon trail but to deal with muddy cart tracks and slippery backroads, with or without heavy trailers in-tow. All of which is well within the Outback's remit thanks to its Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive system.

This usually splits power 50:50 between front and rear axles in manual models – or 60:40 if you've gone for the Lineartronic CVT automatic version. But it's also intelligent enough not simply to leave it at that, instead cleverly shunting power around to the wheel which can best use it in any given slushy situation.

In short, it's better off the tarmac than a car of this kind has any right to be.

Diesel is the only choice for Outback buyers these days and there's just a single 150PS 2.0-litre unit on offer. You can at least however, now match it to automatic transmission, which at last

for Subaru creates the diesel power/auto gearbox combination most buyers in this segment now want.

The links between this Outback and the Legacy Tourer model it's based upon are obvious to the casual observer – but then, so also are the differences. Extended wheelarches and further body-coloured protection along the sills also emphasise the car's off-road credentials, as does its higher 200mm ground clearance.

Up-front, this revised model feels more upmarket, featuring smart carbon-effect accents on the doors, metallic accents for the centre console and the dashboard and a more ergonomic steering wheel design. There are classier instrument dials too and out back, expect to find 526-litres of space with all the seats in place and 1677-litres when you flip the useful levers by the tailgate to flatten the 60:40 split-folding rear bench.

Expect to pay around £30,000 for your Outback in manual gearbox form: there's a £1,500 premium to find if you want the Lineartronic automatic.

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Fuel consumption figures for the Honda range in mpg (l/100km): Urban Cycle 23.2 – 70.6 (12.2 - 4.0), Extra Urban 40.4 – 85.6 (7.0 - 3.3), Combined 32.5 - 78.5 (8.7 - 3.6). CO₂ emissions 201 - 94g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Models Shown: Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic and CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD in optional Passion Red Pearl. Terms and Conditions: Nil Advanced Payment offer on Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual and Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual, £999 Advanced Payment offer on CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD. All offers are correct at the time of going to print however Honda (UK) reserves the right to change this offer at any time. Models subject to availability. Written details available on request. The facilities offered are for the hire of goods. The scheme is available to recipients of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement. To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of a minimum of 12 months allowance. Valid for applications between 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014 to Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY

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Oak Garage was established as a business 43 years ago, in 1971. The dealership relocated from its old site in Tipton late last year and reopened at smart new premises on Sterling Park in Brierley Hill near Dudley last December.

With plenty of parking, an attractive new showroom and modern, well-equipped workshop, Oak Garage is in an excellent position to provide for all your motoring needs.

What's more, the company is backed by a wealth of automotive retailing and customer service experience and this is easy to spot from the moment you walk onto the premises.

Choice

Oak Garage's friendly sales team are in an excellent position to source more cars to order taking into account all your personal requirements.

With more than 1000 ex-Motability vehicles available at any one time, they are bound to be able to find a car that exactly matches your needs and lifestyle.

They also display an interesting variety of cars that include small economical city cars, compact hatchbacks, estates and family friendly MPV people carriers.

They're displayed at a convenient location close to the Merry Hill Centre, not miles away on an inaccessible industrial estate.

The dealership also display within the Westfield Merry Hill Shopping Centre where up to six more vehicles are showcased outside Marks and Spencer and H Samuel.

This venture has proved to be highly successful for both the dealership and the shopping centre itself, so much so that the arrangement between Oak Garage and the owners of the centre has lasted for eight years.



Westfield Merry Hill Shopping Centre is only around 600 yards away from the dealership, this makes it easy to arrange visits and test drives.

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To find out more call 01384 75097 or visit their website by logging onto www.oakgarage.co.uk

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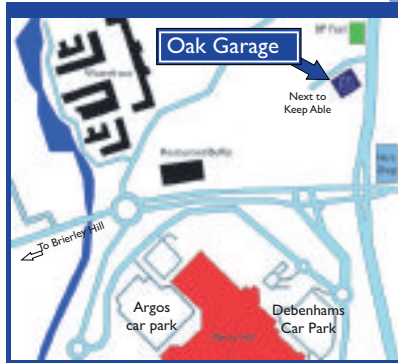
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Tougher calls for A-Team in swim gala

A & B swimming teams from Halesowen travelled to Droitwich and Redditch for the first round of the Worcester Winter League.

The A team had the tougher of the draws and the B team produced the best result of the night.

The A team were in contention throughout their gala but had to settle for third place.

The B team grabbed first spot after strong finishes in the final four relays of the gala.

In the A team double event winners were James Cuthbert in the butterfly and breaststroke and Mark Laing in the butterfly and freestyle.

Other individual winners were Lauren Hill in the butterfly, Zach Collins in the backstroke, Lily Merrell in the breaststroke and Jack Simpson in the freestyle.

The 13-and-under relay team were unbeaten and won both medley and freestyle events with the team including India Hanke and Jakob Baker.

The 15-and-under team including Talia Mitchell, Sam Bradley-Wood and Jacob Smith also won the freestyle relay.

In the B team the star of the show was Kate Morrice who won both butterfly and freestyle.

Other individual winners were Amber Harrison-backstroke, Dermot Cameron and Luke Morris-butterfly, Kitty Luscombe-breaststroke, James Benson and Jacob Darby-freestyle.

The age 11, 15-and-under and open relay teams won both freestyle and medley events with teams including Isabelle Cashmore, Melissa Parsons Holly Simpson, Imogen Vaughan-Hawkins, James Gaskin, Aaron Spoor, Molly Kelly, Jamie Greenwood, Zac Rollason, Georgia and Natasha Bird, Sian Carey and Max Rollason.

Scores from Gala 1 (Redditch): Halesowen B 177, Stourbridge B 169, Redditch B 165, Haden Hill 155, Perry Beches & SSS 120
Scores from Gala 2 (at Droitwich): Worcester A 202, Redditch A 192, Halesowen A 176, Worcester B 120, Droitwich 104.

Viral score

A SPECTACULAR winning goal by Hedgesford Town's Elliott Durrell has become an internet sensation. The 24-year-old midfielder scored a stunning goal in stoppage time to clinch a 2-1 win for the Pitmen at Bradford Park Avenue. Visit www.expressandstar.com/sp or text the goal.

Hales battle opponents and the weather

Old Hales 24 Scunthorpe 7

TWO teams, both of whom were on a high after good wins the previous week, expected muddy conditions but not for one minute did they expect thunder, lightning, high winds, hail the size of marbles and constant driving rain.

However, from the kick off Hales set their stall out with a series of drives towards the Scunthorpe line where after only two minutes Scunthorpe conceded a Penalty 10 metres out.

Quick thinking from scrum Half Nathan Jones saw him take a quick tap to snipe his way over the

line for the first try of the game.

It seemed the Hales boys were in the mood to pile on the points after what was a great start, until the weather conditions deteriorated.

For the next 30 minutes both teams attempted to play flowing rugby despite what was being thrown at them, and were rewarded with the second Hales try scored by Skipper Richard Taylor from yet another great rolling maul at 10 metres out, converted by Fly Half Stephen Powell.

By this stage the game was turning into a constant round of scrum after scrum which was frus-

Rugby

trating the supporters from both camps.

To add injury to insult Hales winger Joe Oxford was carried off with what seemed like a dislocated knee.

After 48 minutes Hooker Pete Fitzgerald found his way to the back of yet another maul following a great take in the line from Mark Evans, which was forced towards the try line for the Hooker to crash over for the third Hales try.

Both players, and spectators left

the pitch for 10 to try to get warm, only to return to more of the same horrific weather and yet another plethora of scrums.

So 70 minutes passed with both teams doing their best to entertain the crowd before centre Andy Robinson picked up a neat pass 10 metres into the Scunthorpe half and smashed his way through numerous attempted tackles to force his way over the line for the try of the match, and the bonus points, again converted by Powell.

To their credit Scunthorpe gave their all and forced several penalties in the Hales 22, which gave the

referee the opportunity to issue another yellow card this time to back row Dan Young.

A deserved consolation try followed for Scunthorpe, so ended what most of the players described as the worst weather conditions they had ever played in.

Thoughts and best wishes are with Joe Oxford who will be out for the rest of the season with a dislocated knee.

This Saturday Old Hales have a break from league rugby, with the next league game away on February 8 to South Leicester, kick off 2.15 pm.

Brown's late goal lets Glassboys share points

Stourbridge 2 Truro City 2

A LATE equaliser from Kayelden Brown salvaged a point for the Glassboys and spared Gary Hackett's men from a second successive home defeat.

Stourbridge fielded two debutants with new signings, striker Tom Berwick from Hemel Hempstead Town and ex-Wolves midfielder Louis Harris from Tamworth both included in the starting 11.

The home side found themselves trailing with a bolt out of the blue.

Olly Brokenshire got the better of Will Richards and then accelerated away before toe-poking an extraordinary 25-yard effort over the head of a stranded Dean Coleman and into the roof of the net.

Stourbridge looked for a quick response and were unlucky not to level matters on the half-hour mark when following a surging run down the right flank by Drew Canavan, his subsequent deep cross fell invitingly for Berwick to hit a volley that was blocked on the line by Steve Tully.

Stourbridge again went close with a corner from Ben Billingham only partially headed away and Richards returned an overhead hook-shot that clipped the top of the bar.

Eight minutes into the second period, Stourbridge drew level with Brown applying a faint touch to Billingham's inswinging free-kick from the right to find the net, but Truro responded with Pugh seeing his far-post header from

Football

Brokenshire's free-kick bounce wide, while Les Afful dribbled into the left-hand side of the box and then took aim, however his shot was deflected past the far post.

Injured home defender Andre Francis was replaced by Kyle Haynes, but Stourbridge enjoyed a good passage of play.

In the 68th minute Sean Geddes won possession and clipped the ball forward to Berwick who passed inside for Canavan to hit a drive that keeper Grant Fisher safely held.

With nine minutes left Cody Cooke slipped a pass into Watson and his shot should have been dealt with, however the ball squirmed through Coleman's hands and through his legs to put Truro back in-front.

Two minutes from time though Stourbridge restored parity after Geddes won a drop-ball and Brown's persistence paid off as he forced the mistake by the by-line and Geddes turned the ball back for Brown to fire home past Fisher.

Molineux pays last respects to Bert 'The Cat'



Wolves players pay their respects to the late goalkeeper Bert Williams with displays of gold flowers

TEARS flowed and chants echoed around the ground as an emotional Molineux paid tribute to the great Bert Williams.

Former players and fans turned out to honour the footballing legend who died eight days ago at the age of 93.

A minute's applause was held before Saturday's game against Bristol City, which Wolves won 3-1, in honour of Bert while flowers were laid in his memory.

His family also gathered at Molineux and paid tribute to both the club and the fans, saying the event

had been 'better than anything they had expected'. The crowd joined in the spirit of the moment by breaking out into chants in his honour before and during the game, with the South Bank singing 'one Bert Williams' and 'England's number one' in reference to the star, who won 24 caps for his country, played 420 times for the club from 1945-57 and won the League title in 1954 and the FA Cup in 1949.

Tributes from a book of condolence, including some from former players such as Matt Murray and Mel Eves, were read out while other

players, past and present, such as Malcolm Finlayson, Ron Flowers, Phil Parkes and Carl Ikeme joined the Williams family pitchside.

Before the game, gold flowers spelling out Bert and The Cat were carried by Wolves keeper Aaron McCarey and Bristol City's Elliott Parish from the halfway line and placed behind the respective goals. Fans will be able to pay their respects to Bert at a memorial service on February 5 at noon at Wolverhampton's St Peter's Collegiate Church.

Boxers to make their debuts on undercard

EJKO Promotions' March Mayhem undercard is beginning to take shape.

The show, on Saturday, March 1, is headlined by a British Masters Title fight and an International Bronze Masters showdown.

Stourbridge's International Masters Welterweight Champion, Steven Pearce, takes on Sheffield's Ryan Hardy whilst Walsall's Luke Paddock goes in search of Bronze Masters honours against Stoke's Kevin Hanks at light welterweight.

Halesowen super middleweight prospect, Lennox Clarke, takes on Congo-born Didier Blanch looking to record a third successive victory after disposing of James Child and Jody Meikle recently.

Three boxers are also set to make their professional debuts. Birmingham cruiserweight, Andrew Lambert, faces tough Bulgarian Tayar Mehmed and Leicester welterweight, Ryandeep Nandha, steps in with evergreen Birmingham battler, Jason Nesbitt.

Tickets, priced at £30 and £60 Ringside, are available from Walsall Town Hall Box Office on 0845 111 2900.

Brunt calls to ease up over Saido

CAPTAIN Chris Brunt has warned Albion they cannot heap pressure on Saido Berahino to score the goals to keep them in the Premier League.

Brunt reckons Berahino is too young to shoulder the goalscoring burden alone and urged his fellow midfielders to take up the slack.

Brunt has warned 20-year-old Berahino cannot be overloaded.

"Saido's goals have spoken for themselves but people forget that he's still a young guy and he's coming off the back of quite a serious injury," said Brunt.

"We can't just chuck him in and stick all the pressure on him to score goals because it wouldn't be fair on him. It's not that he's not capable, because he is. But the club have used him sparingly and there are reasons for that."

Victor Anichebe was expected to start at Villa Park after returning from a hamstring injury.



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Bye to Bert
Molineux pays last respects to The Cat
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Coaches named to take over campaign

NORTH Midlands have appointed a new coaching team for this season's campaign in the County Championship Bill Beaumont Cup First Division.

Former Moseley, Stourbridge and Birmingham & Solihull hooker Dan Protherough has been appointed the county's new head coach as successor to Scott Bemand who stepped down last season after North Midlands had secured promotion back to the top flight.

Protherough will be assisted by B&S's Rod Petty with Old Halesonians and former Moseley back-row forward Mark Evans as his assistants.

Protherough, who is also head coach of the North Midlands Under-20 side, is from a well-known rugby family as his late father Dave played for Moseley and Cheltenham and then coached Moseley, Worcester and Cheltenham.

Protherough's younger brother Richard also played senior rugby for Worcester, Moseley and Coventry.

"From a continuity perspective it was felt that Dan was the right man for the job," said Dave Thomas, chairman of the North Midlands Playing Committee.

The new team will again be supported by North Midlands President Charlie Hemmings as team manager and John Corr as team secretary.

Challenge to high earners

KENNY JACKETT has thrown down the gauntlet to Wolves' highly-paid star 'outcasts' and challenged them to fight for their places.

Top earner Kevin Doyle leads an unhappy group on the fringes after falling alarmingly from grace and scoring just three times this season, along with Bakary Sako, Jamie O'Hara, Bjorn Sigurdarson and Wayne Hennessey.

Those five players alone are draining around £120,000-a-week out of the club between them.

"For people out of the team, whether that's Doyle, Sako, Hennessey, Sigurdarson - if they're hurting and disappointed, it's up to them to fight their way back," said head coach Jackett.

"It's part of football life, which dictates you lose your place sometimes.

"It happens during a career."

DK take Hull of a beating with a shutout

Hull 62 Dudley Kingswinford 0

FOLLOWING last week's second half performance against league leaders Darlington, DK travelled to fellow strugglers Hull with some optimism.

There were two changes from last Saturday, both in the front row: Ashley Newall and Richard Hickman replaced Alex Francis and Dan Shakespeare.

Unfortunately the optimism was short lived as the big Hull pack took control from the kick off.

This dominance created an armchair ride for the host's three quarter line.

DK defended resolutely for 10 minutes

Rugby

but their defence was finally breached when a hole was carved in the centre and full back Jamie Barnard entered the line to score. Greg Lound converted.

In the 20th minute Hull forced a lineout inside the DK 22 and after recycling the ball several times, worked wide to No.8 Santiago Socino who was loitering on the left wing to score.

Following a poor kick off, the Hull threes unleashed an identical move which led to their first try and full back Jamie Barnard bagged his second. Lound converted.

Once again the kick off was poor, allowing Hull to immediately run the ball back.

DK were penalised for handling on the floor and the resulting kick found touch five metres from the Dudley line.

The lineout was secured by Hull and they drove the ball over the try line for No.8 to score. There then followed some excellent DK pressure but the final pass always seemed to astray.

This was evident in the 30th minute when another DK sortie broke down and full back Jamie Barnard gathered a loose and ran the length of the pitch to cross for his hat trick. Lound added the extra. The first half came

to an end in torrential rain and thunder.

DK fought hard against the conditions and showed great character but the sheer size of the home pack took its toll and in the 54th minute they scored a push over try. Lound converted.

DK made several changes. Matt Squires replaced Richard Hickman and Ryan Smitherman made way for James Jefferson. Sam Pedley came into the back row at the expense of Jon Tideswell and newcomer Sam Shepherd made his debut replacing Kieran Pinches. Finally Josh Morrissey replaced Ashley Newall. However, the hosts and they went on to score a four more tries.

Hales get points in wet game

North Notts 1 OHHC 1sts 2
OLD Halesonians Hockey Club grabbed all three points in the final moments of the game in Mansfield.

Following the Christmas break, Hales have taken a while to get back up to full speed, picking up just one point in the last two games.

They travelled the 80 miles to Mansfield in the hope of returning to winning ways.

Both teams started strongly, with chances at either end, but the weather soon changed and the game turned into a scrappy affair.

With the rain and hail plummeting down, the majority of chances came from well-worked penalty corner routines.

The hosts came closest first, when a drag flick was watched wide by the Hales defence, but the visitors then had a string of corners which they could not convert.

With the scores level at half time, there was just enough time to try and dry off and regroup as Hales looked to take control.

Early in the second half, a penalty corner was finally converted when Chris Waitley reacted first to the initial save by the North Notts goalkeeper.

His first time volley saw the ball placed into the net.

However, the hosts hit back hard as they looked to keep themselves out of the relegation fight.

North Notts were awarded a succession of penalty corners, and they were eventually able to convert to level. With less than five minutes left Paul Woodall put the ball in the net for Hales.

Other Results: OHHC 2nds 1 Shrewsbury 1; Bournville 3-OHHC 3rds 2; OHHC 4ths 4 Bournville 1; OHHC 5ths 2 Otton & West Warwick 1.

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WOLVES GRAB WIN WITHOUT GRIFFITHS

Oldham 0 Wolves 3

SUDDENLY, it looks like it's all coming together for Wolves – without Leigh Griffiths.

Three successive wins and eight goals have put Kenny Jackett's side back on course after their pre-Christmas struggles for victories.

Griffiths will surely seal his move to Celtic before Friday's 11pm deadline and Wolves will have a replacement in. But, at the moment, they don't look like they are missing him.

Nouha Dicko has made just the impact Jackett was hoping for, adding genuine pace and power to an ailing attack. And what a time for Bakary Sako to find form again.

The French winger has looked a rejuvenated force since coming off the bench against Bristol City last Saturday, and looked even more determined and imposing at Boundary Park Tuesday night.

Bench

That Jackett could leave James Henry on the bench to allow for the return of Sako says much about the quality available in Wolves' squad.

It is that strength in depth which could be the key to chipping away at the top two, who continue to pound away at the top of the division like a pair of runaway trains.

Despite the sudden gush of wins, Wolves still haven't eaten into the lead established by Brentford and Leyton Orient after the top two won yet again last night, Jackett's side merely preventing them getting any

Football

further away. The nature of the two London teams is acting to sharpen Wolves' resolve to continue winning themselves.

Ultimately, second-half goals from man of the match Kevin McDonald, Michael Jacobs and substitute Henry gave Jackett's side their equal-biggest win since August.

Wolves introduced Kevin Doyle for Lee Evans at half-time and Oldham were soon made to pay for their wastefulness as the visitors scored from the first attack.

McDonald showed typical calmness to place his shot into the corner of the net to Oxlley's right as he ran onto a pass from Jacobs, who dribbled across goal cutting in from the right.

Wolves went on to clinch the points in ruthless fashion with a superbly-worked second goal that said everything about the way they are mastering a more fluid passing game.

Man of the match McDonald spotted Ricketts sprinting forwards from right-back and rolled the ball into his path for a quick cross that was met by a first-time finish from Jacobs.

Henry made it 3-0 in time added on.



Kevin McDonald scores the first of Wolves' three goals during the away game at league rivals Oldham

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